

NCCC ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION  
FALL 2015



A Magazine for Niagara County Community College Alumni

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# NCCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



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## CLASS NOTES

### Ken Shearer '70

Ken obtained an Associate's degree in Art and then went on to receive a Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from Buffalo State College in 1972. Since leaving NCCC, Ken has established his own design business, teaches drafting, is a professional caricature artist, and works for a major publishing firm.

### Chris Therrien '78

Upon graduating from NCCC with a degree in Fine Arts, Chris went on to receive a Bachelor's and Master's in Art Education from Buffalo State College. He is a retired art teacher and also owned Airbrush Artworks at Darien Lake Amusement Park. Since retirement, he enjoys creating and selling his art.

### Christopher Paul Fiegl '84

Upon graduating from NCCC, Christopher went on to receive a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Northeastern University in 1987, and then received his Juris Doctor from Cleveland Marshall College of Law at Cleveland State University in 1992. He now serves as an Attorney at Law in the state of Ohio.

### Shannon Smith '12

Shannon graduated from NCCC with an Associate's degree in Human Services and from Buffalo State with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work. She is now employed in Orlando, Florida in a Health and Rehab Center, as a social worker for seniors. She says, "It is a rewarding experience to help people. I love to interact with the residents and try to brighten their day."

## CLASS NOTES FROM MEMBERS OF THE NCCC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

### Michael LaFever '70

Mike LaFever majored in Liberal Arts at NCCC and graduated in 1970. He went on to earn Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Elementary Education from Buffalo State, a Master's degree in Administration from St. Bonaventure University, and a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership from University at Buffalo. He taught for over ten years, spent over 25 years in school administration, was a School District Superintendent, and now works in Higher Education Administration as the Chief Administrative Officer at a local college.

### Sal Messina '76

Sal received his Associates degree in Accounting and went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Business from Buffalo State and a Master's degree in Economics from the University at Buffalo. He is a retired Chief Master Sergeant from the United States Air Force and a retired officer from the Internal Revenue Service.

### Lester Robinson III '87

After graduating from NCCC with an Associate's degree in Business, Les went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Finance from SUNY Brockport. Les now works at Northwoods as Senior Long Term Care Planner.

### Dan Jackson '99

Dan graduated from NCCC with a degree in Liberal Arts. He then attended Buffalo State and received a Bachelor's degree in Business. He is now employed as a Local Sales Manager for WTVB.

Do you have personal or professional updates which you would like to share with your classmates? Simply fill out our easy form online at [http://www.niagaracc.suny.edu/alumni/alumni\\_info.php](http://www.niagaracc.suny.edu/alumni/alumni_info.php) and look for your class notes in the edition of "Connections."

Interested in reconnecting with NCCC? Join the NCCC Alumni Association! Find out more information by emailing [alumni@niagaracc.suny.edu](mailto:alumni@niagaracc.suny.edu).

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# ALL IN THE FAMILY

James Turner '86



“Do you mind if we walk and talk?” asked Jim. I looked around at the walls, rooms, patients, doctors, cases of medicine, and anxious families. I smiled and nodded unsurely, “Uh-huh.” It was immediately clear to me that Jim enjoyed the busy hospital units, working closely with his teams, and helping patients when possible. The paper work in his office could wait for today.

James Turner, Vice President of Surgical Services at the Erie County Medical Campus (ECMC), or simply, “Jim,” handed me a fresh pair of scrubs and showed me the changing room. I suited up, Jim approved of my new look and we were out the door, quickly walking to do rounds. We toured the Emergency rooms, the Peri-operative rooms, Ambulatory/recovery rooms, Sterile Processing, and the Cardiac Catheterization Lab. Doctors were whizzing by, patients were being tended to, nurses were administering medicine, and families eagerly looked through the waiting room glass.

We approached the doors to 12 trauma operating rooms and I learned that it was time to suit up even further. Jim handed me a bouffant cap, medical shoe covers, and a face mask. I slipped into the coverings and we entered the surgical suites. As we walked through the double doors, I saw a wall-sized chart indicating the locations of all surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, and surgical technicians. The Charge Nurse was at the main control center meticulously coordinating names, teams, and rooms with magnets highlighting staff members and their assignments. Twelve screens monitored 12 rooms. There was also a patient tracking electronic screen showing location and status similar to a flight schedule. The coordination, planning, and professionalism was fascinating.

Jim then led me to the new four-room Surgical Center which opened in December 2014. Years of experience in the surgical technology field paired with his passion for innovation in the operating room prepared Jim to plan and oversee the \$16 million design of ECMC’s new Surgical Center. After touring the new Peri-operative, Operation, and Recovery rooms, I was in awe. The floor plans and placement of each machine, bed, light, hose, rack, station, and computer were specifically planned and placed to be the highest functioning in the operating room for staff and safest for the patient. “Technological developments create newer ways to treat patients. It’s an exciting world,” boasted Jim. The spirit of the new building spilled into the waiting room. Beautiful mosaic tiles and modern soft lit chandeliers adorned the lobby. Several televisions were mounted to the walls and overlooked the couches and comfortable seating where a few patients waited for their loved ones.



As we made our way through the Campus, it was obvious that the staff admired and respected Jim. Most noticeable was their exchange of witty banter and humor. Jim exudes humility and a teamwork spirit. “Everyone has a role and everyone is important for daily operations and daily procedures,” he explained.

His knowledge of surgical procedures and each person’s role may stem from the fact that Jim’s passion lays in his experience as an EMT, a surgical technician staff nurse, surgical charge nurse, endoscopic patient care coordinator and endoscopy manager in several area hospitals. Since 2001, as Vice President of Surgical Services at ECMC, Jim oversees Surgical and Cardiac service lines and has direct responsibility for 12 trauma operating suites and the four room surgical center. His department is responsible for Anesthesia, Urology, GI, Ambulatory/Recovery, Sterile Processing, Cardiac Catheterization Lab, non-invasive cardiology, and a Vascular Access Lab. He oversees a surgical procedure volume of 16,000 each year and is responsible for an eight-figure expense budget.

A career in healthcare is not possible without adequate training. Jim began his education at NCCC and graduated with an Associate’s degree in Surgical Technology. “NCCC helped drive my focus into the next steps of healthcare.” Jim dug deeper into his educational path and went on to receive an Associate’s degree in Nursing from Erie Community College in 1988 and then a Baccalaureate of Nursing from Daemen College in 1997. Jim also attended the Harvard Business School Healthcare Delivery Program, learning about the business side of healthcare and graduating in 2011. He is now a speaker for the local Harvard program where he teaches Orthopedic and Surgery case studies to local healthcare executives.

In addition to this teaching opportunity, Jim led the building of a NCCC surgical technologist classroom and simulated operating room at ECMC. This allows NCCC students to take classes on the hospital campus, train, and also do their clinical rotations. This gives true life training and shows the student their career direction. Jim also serves on the NCCC Curriculum Advisory Committee for the Surgical Technology Program. “I take my job very seriously on the committee. The Program Coordinator, Gemma Fournier, is exceptional. She stays up-to-date with certifications and she is a huge resource to the region. The committee is diverse and helps steer the direction of the program and employment opportunities.”

Jim gives back to NCCC in other ways as well. He is a Foundation Board Member, a Presidential Partner, and a member of the Alumni Association Committee. “It’s interesting to give back to my roots. I love being a part of growing the next generation of students.” It’s important for Jim to reflect on those roots and view the College experience through new students’ eyes. Jim shared, “Before each meeting on campus I arrive 45 minutes early to reflect on my time as a student. I walk the halls, visit the cafeteria,



wander through the library, and put myself in the current students’ shoes. It’s important to see their perspective.”

Outside of NCCC, Jim donates his time and talents to other organizations close to his heart. He was involved in leadership with the Boy Scouts and raised two Eagle Scouts of his own, Kevin, 21 and Brian, 19. As an avid sportsman, Jim bike rides over 1,500 miles a year as a member of the Niagara Frontier Bike Club. He has participated in the “Registered Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa,” the largest across-state bike ride, covering over 550 miles in six days. Additionally, Jim has participated in the “Bicycle Ride Across Tennessee” and the “London, Kentucky Three Day Redbud Ride.” His exceptional biking skills and leadership are used during his annual participation in the Ride For Roswell and as the ECMC Team Captain for the Tour de Cure.

His wife, Nancy, is supportive of his educational, career, and personal endeavors. She, too, is a healthcare professional and works as a Registered Nurse in a local hospital. She is always by his side at the Annual NCCC Foundation Gala, the largest fundraiser for scholarships each year. Jim gives back at this event and throughout the year because “NCCC is a great stepping stone for students. The tuition is affordable, many important courses are covered, and study habits are instilled. Students can go on to even higher education or they are prepared to enter the workforce.”

“I started in welding as a vocation in high school and ended up the Vice President of Surgical Services. How does that happen? Surgery is just a different type of shop that focuses on the patient’s procedures and care needs. Once you find your passion, you’ll find the job for you.” I left his office on this note, grateful for the tour of the hospital and more appreciative of all healthcare workers, especially our NCCC Alumni in the field. Thank you for your service, Jim. We are proud to call you a member of the NCCC family.





**STUDENTS IN SEATS ✓**

**INSTRUCTOR TEACHING CLASS ✓**

**BOOK IN HANDS ✓**

**SCHOLARSHIPS ISSUED ✓**

**ON TRACK FOR DEGREES ✓**

Your Annual Fund contribution goes to where funds are needed most. Your contributions support scholarships which aid with tuition, equipment, academic competitions, and more in order to ensure student success. Your gifts, whether grand or modest, add to the student experience and the quality programming we offer our community. We thank you for your continuous support of your alma mater.

## N C C C A L U M N I D O N A T I O N F O R M

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ MAJOR \_\_\_\_\_ GRAD YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to make a tax deductible donation to:**

Annual Fund    Learning Commons Capital Campaign    Alumni Scholarship    Special Allocation: \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to make a tax deductible donation in the amount of:**

\$1,000 Patron    \$500 Blue & Gold Club    \$250 Thunderwolves Club    \$100 Friend    Other \_\_\_\_\_

**METHOD OF PAYMENT**

Enclosed is a check made payable to the NCCC Foundation  
 Discover    Master Card    Visa

ACCOUNT # \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRATION DATE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

Please detach form and mail to **NCCC Foundation, 3111 Saunders Settlement Rd, Sanborn, NY 14132**. If you would like to make a contribution over the phone or in person, please call (716)614-5910. Please call for more information about memorial contributions, legacy giving, naming opportunities, or creating or contributing to a scholarship.



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT **FRED RICKAN '81**

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Fred Rickan '81 considers himself fortunate. With “the greatest wife in the world” by his side, four charming and successful sons, and leadership in a local investment firm, life is good according to Fred.

Because life is so good, he is adamant about sharing his talents and treasures with the Western New York region. “I enjoy giving back to the community that has given so much to us,” affirms Fred. In addition to serving on the NCCC Foundation Board and his Presidential Partner membership, Fred was also the first Presenting Sponsor of the NCCC Alumni 5K Run/Walk. As an alumnus of NCCC, this sponsorship is particularly special to him. “NCCC gave me time to focus; time to mature. I was able to work and afford college, so I want to support the school where I got my start.”

He has been intrinsically interested in the Market since he was a teenager. “I owned stock when I was in high school. It sparked an interest in me, especially when we played stock market games in class. It influenced me to pursue a business degree at NCCC.” After hearing about the successful reputation of NCCC’s Business program, he and a group of friends decided to attend. Fred earned his Associate’s degree in Retail Business Management in 1981, and has been working in the field ever since. Today, his passion for NCCC remains and he is now an advocate for attending community college. “NCCC is a great place to start. Every student will receive a solid education, they will be able to transfer their credits to another college, and they can graduate without going into large amounts of debt.”

Fred enjoyed his time at NCCC. Not only did he receive a quality education, he was also given the opportunity to play club lacrosse and connect with several teachers who made an impact on him academically and personally. “The instructors had real world experience. They were actual accountants and leaders in business who were teaching us. I liked the practical methods they used.”

Upon graduating from NCCC, Fred proved to be promising in his area of study and was immediately hired by a small boutique firm.



“ I enjoy giving back to the community that has given so much to us... ”

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Fred has held a leadership role with the company for more than half of his career and continues to emulate successful business practices with his team members.

Outside of his suit and tie, Fred can be found in more comfortable attire. He is an avid sportsman and has coached lacrosse, baseball, and hockey for many years. Fred is also an enthusiastic outdoorsman and enjoys spending time on his property in the Southern Tier. His wife, Sharon, and their four grown sons: Eric, Brent, Grant, and Blake make it a priority to support local charities outside of the NCCC Foundation. Recently they have supported Carly’s Club, Summit Educational Resources, UB’s Buffalo Law Alumni Association, and various charity golf tournaments.





Over 200 people line up at the starting line for the 2015 Alumni 5K Run/Walk.



Alumni Committee Members (Dr. Martin Drake '75, Dan Jackson '99, Sal Messina '76) sell raffle tickets to raise funds for student scholarships.



Foundation Board Members and Alumni welcome the new class of Distinguished Student Scholars.



Distinguished Alumnus William Paterson, James Carr, and Distinguished Alumnus Dr. Leon Smith from the first graduating Class of 1965 lead the Class of 2015 to Commencement.