

KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# currents

*Spring 2018*

## Trumpeting her love of Kirkwood

A future profession in music  
transformed through the  
solace of the band room.

A PUBLICATION OF THE **Kirkwood**  
FOUNDATION

Dear friends,

As my last few months as Kirkwood's president draw to a close, I look back on my time here with great pride. One of the things I am most proud of is the success of our students. It's real success, in real, measurable ways. Over the years, we have seen improvements in student retention, in success rates and in student transfer rates to other institutions. More Kirkwood students are staying in school, doing better work in their classes, and building upon their successes and transferring on to another college or university. They are getting a phenomenal education here at Kirkwood, and after they walk across the stage with their degree, they'll see the real return on their investment.



Of course, all of this would not be possible without the help of our generous donors. Students who receive scholarships are more than two and a half times as likely to graduate compared to students who don't receive scholarships. We have crossed the \$3 million mark in scholarships awarded annually to our students. That's an extraordinary impact on those pursuing their dreams at Kirkwood. We have one of the largest community college scholarship programs in the country. This is a big win for the community we serve. In this issue, you'll read about student Katelynn Chalstrom and alumna RaeAnn Gordon. Through their stories, you'll be able to see how scholarships really do impact and change lives.

It requires additional financial support to fulfill the college's mission of identifying community needs; providing accessible, quality education and training; and promoting opportunities for lifelong learning. In the pages that follow you will meet Dr. Richard L. Ferguson, whose generosity and lifetime dedication to helping others succeed has expanded opportunities for Kirkwood students.

My 15 years at Kirkwood have been truly wonderful, and as I move on to the next phase, generosity is one of the biggest things I'm going to miss about this incredible place. Kirkwood truly is the community's college. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for making my time at Kirkwood as memorable as it has been.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mick Starcevich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Mick Starcevich  
President

## JUNE

- 6–7 Passport to Croatia Dinner  
The Class Act Restaurant  
The Hotel at Kirkwood Center  
5–9 p.m.
- 17 Father’s Day Brunch  
The Hotel at Kirkwood Center  
10 a.m.–2 p.m.

## JULY

- 11–12 Passport to New Zealand Dinner  
The Class Act Restaurant  
The Hotel at Kirkwood Center  
5–9 p.m.

## AUGUST

- 1–2 Passport to Japan Dinner  
The Class Act Restaurant  
The Hotel at Kirkwood Center  
5–9 p.m.
- 2 Jazz Under the Stars  
The Jazz Standard, featuring Gail and Paul Williams  
Noelridge Park  
7 p.m.
- 9 Jazz Under the Stars  
Kevin “B.F.” Burt and the Corridor Blues All Stars  
Noelridge Park  
7 p.m.
- 16 Jazz Under the Stars  
Funk Daddies  
Noelridge Park  
7 p.m.
- 23 Jazz Under the Stars  
Eastern Iowa All Star Big Band and Singers  
McGrath Amphitheatre  
7 p.m.

donor feature

# Richard L. Ferguson Atrium

“

Kirkwood provides students with a first-class education; one that prepares them for a lifetime of opportunities. I know of no investment with returns that compare to those of an education.

”



# DR. RICHARD L. FERGUSON

*time, talent and treasure*

A special ceremony held in March celebrated the official naming of the Richard L. Ferguson Atrium at the Kirkwood Regional Center at the University of Iowa in Coralville, in recognition of his significant contributions to education on both a local and national scale.

Dr. Ferguson, an international leader in education and workforce development, has dedicated his life to helping others excel in education and career endeavors. It is fitting that the atrium bearing his name is located at the Kirkwood Regional Center at the University of Iowa. This center is a model of innovation and entrepreneurialism, founded on strategic collaborations to connect educational and business resources to serve as a catalyst for college and career exploration, certification and degree attainment.

Dr. Ferguson began his career as a math teacher in Pennsylvania. He worked on his Master's degree during the summers and at night, and then went on to earn his Doctoral degree in educational research from the University of Pittsburgh.

ACT recruited Dr. Ferguson in 1972 to work in Iowa City as a research psychologist. His intelligence, passion, dedication and leadership did not go unnoticed, and after a series of increasingly responsible roles, he became executive vice president in 1983. He was named president in 1988, and then CEO and chairman of the board in 2002. Dr. Ferguson retired from ACT in 2010. During his almost 40

years at ACT, the organization grew from fewer than 100 to more than 1,400 staff and became a national leader in education and workforce development. Students throughout the country, world and especially at Kirkwood have benefitted.

As former CEO and chairman of ACT, Dr. Ferguson facilitated the largest single donation Kirkwood has ever received – a \$2 million gift in 2010 to start the ACT Endowed Scholarship, which supports students. The gift was the culmination of a longtime partnership, which continues today, between the college and the organization. To date, 151 ACT scholarships totaling more than \$580,000 have been awarded to Kirkwood students.

Dr. Ferguson's commitment to and passion for Kirkwood and its students goes beyond financial support. He has served on the Kirkwood Foundation board since 2010 and was a member of the search committee for the college's next president in 2017 and the next vice president of advancement in 2018. In 2015, Dr. Ferguson received the Samuel J. Kirkwood Legacy Award, which is the highest honor bestowed on friends of the college.

Dr. Ferguson continues to help Kirkwood students through his connections with several highly successful entrepreneurial educational businesses. His invaluable guidance and generous philanthropy have helped Kirkwood Community College and the Kirkwood Foundation achieve their missions.

# KATELYNN CHALSTROM

## *trumpeting her love of Kirkwood*



Second-year music program student Katelynn Chalstrom's passion for music stems all the way back to her elementary school days. Inspired by a local high school jazz band on an elementary school tour, she created cardboard musical instruments for herself and her friends. Katelynn discovered she loved the trumpet and dreamed of playing in a high school jazz band like the one she heard. Katelynn followed her dream and has often turned to her love for band to help her get through trying times.

Katelynn took her first trumpet lesson in the fifth grade. The first time she stepped foot into the band room, her passion for band became real and alive. She felt a true connection with the room, the music and her trumpet.

Life for Katelynn progressed like any other student advancing from

elementary school to junior high. When Katelynn entered high school, she felt an even deeper connection in her love for the trumpet and band through so many unique and rewarding opportunities. Through the inspiration, encouragement and guidance from her band director, she decided that she, too, wanted to be a band director someday.

Then, during the middle of her junior year, Katelynn's dad passed away unexpectedly. She was just 16 years old. After the initial shock, she fled to her safe space: her high school band room. Here she found the solace needed to help push through and move forward. As Katelynn entered her senior year in high school, her life was still in transition. Her biggest cheerleader was gone. Her mom was now a single parent raising two daughters. Her mentor and band director of three years had accepted a position at another school. And, she had decisions to make about college.

As the year moved on, everything slowly fell into place. She received the John Philip Sousa Award, ending her high school band career on a high note. This award is given to one outstanding senior band member and recognizes superior musicianship, dependability, loyalty and cooperation. By the end of the school year, she had made the decision to continue living at home with her mom and attend Kirkwood Community College.

"I knew Kirkwood was the school for me after my very first visit. Beth Zamzow, professor of music, and the rest of the music faculty were so

encouraging and nice," commented Katelynn. "It just felt right here."

In addition to receiving the Howard Ellson Memorial Music Endowed Scholarship, Katelynn was awarded the Betty Winokur Endowed Scholarship, which helped alleviate the financial burden of attending college. Receiving both scholarships meant others believed in her potential, which has been a big motivator in helping her succeed at Kirkwood.

Today, Katelynn keeps busy with Kirkwood's Jazz Ensemble, jazz combos, Chamber Ensemble and with Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. She also works part time as a page assisting patrons at the Marion Public Library. Katelynn is still on track for a future band director career and will be transferring to the University of Iowa to pursue her Bachelor of Music in music education. In her life after Kirkwood, she plans to take the next step in her music career by becoming a member of the Hawkeye Marching Band. Katelynn realizes her time at Kirkwood is exactly what she needed to make her dreams become a reality.

— “ —  
Being a student at Kirkwood has helped me build myself as a better performer and is setting me up for a future profession in music.

— ” —  
—Katelynn Chalstrom

Dear friends,

The Alumni office is a special place. We are privileged to hear your Kirkwood stories from the past—reflections of college experiences, classes, and faculty and staff who made a lasting impression. College is a milestone in one's life journey, and we are delighted so many alumni value those memories from their time at Kirkwood.



The Kirkwood Eagles vs. Iowa Lakes doubleheader game on Feb. 17 offered the perfect opportunity to welcome back our 1988 National Championship Men's Basketball team to Johnson Hall. Our alumni and their families enjoyed a full day of shooting hoops, visiting with the current players, celebrating two wins and a social after. Thank you to those players who joined us for the day, and we hope their next generation become Eagles, too.

On Friday, April 13, we hosted our seventh annual Celebration of Success. Each year we are astounded by those nominated for recognition. We celebrate the vast number of alumni who have grown successfully in their careers and as community leaders. This year's Distinguished Alumni Award recipients are: Dr. Cinnamon Sullivan, Dr. Brent Owen and Joel Thys. The President's Award recipient is the Rohde Family for their outstanding support of Kirkwood through the decades. In recognition of her remarkable leadership in higher education, the Trustees' Award recipient is Kathy Hall, CFRE.

Another favorite spring event is the Alumni & Friends Veteran Dinner, which was held Wednesday, May 16, at The Hotel at Kirkwood Center. This special dinner allows us the opportunity to celebrate and thank our Kirkwood veteran alumni for their service to our country. Last year our keynote speaker was Robert Otto, who spoke about the transition from military to civilian life. This year our keynote speaker was Dr. Jeannette Liu, a neurosurgeon at UnityPoint – St. Luke's Hospital.

We express our appreciation to those alumni who have made a recent gift to the Kirkwood Alumni Scholarship or other foundation fund. Each year the college receives over 3,000 scholarship applications from our next generation of students. We are proud to support their college dreams and career aspirations. Scholarship funds help lessen the financial burden, encourage and empower recipients. Scholarships from the Kirkwood Foundation provide opportunities, change lives and positively impact our communities.

Thank you for continuing to share your Kirkwood stories with us. We strive to make meaningful differences in our community and appreciate the continued relationships with the nearly 200,000 Kirkwood alumni who live and work alongside us. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

Warm regards,

Jody Donaldson  
Alumni Officer

## Alumni Leadership Council

Melanie Abu-Nameh '01  
Kirkwood Community College

Chad Bosch '96  
Bosch Financial Inc.

Cassandra Brower '16  
Iowa State University student

Lorilei Christner '90  
Van Meter Inc.

Teri Copler '80  
TrueNorth Companies

Jeff Driscoll '86, '92  
Primus Construction

Shawn Gallagher (Chair-Elect) '86  
Ladco Inc.

Deborah Gertsen (Chair) '83  
Cedar Rapids Bank and Trust

Stephen Hanisch '10  
Kirkwood Community College

Nicole Hasenbank '93  
U.S. Bank

Michael Ivester '88  
ITC Midwest

Dawn Jones '93

Dennis Jordan '89  
Mortenson Construction Company

Denise Kassis '17  
University of Northern Iowa student

Mary Klinger (Past-Chair) '88, '14  
St. Luke's Health Care Foundation

Brad Marcus '90  
U.S. Bank

Kristin McVay '05  
UnityPoint Health

Brenda Moore '72  
Retired, University of Iowa Health Care

Jason Pasker '01  
Farmers State Bank

Andy Petersen '03  
iHeart Radio

Robyn Rieckhoff '92  
Cedar Rapids Freedom Festival

Mary Schneekloth '82  
Kirkwood Community College

Rick Seger '80  
Cedar Rapids Bank and Trust

Geret Smith '16  
University of Iowa student

Chris Wheeler '86  
Point Builders LLC

Virginia Wilts '84  
Cedar Rapids Bank and Trust

# RAEANN GORDON

*discovering her passion,  
finding her purpose*

## Project START helped RaeAnn begin at Kirkwood.

### ACADEMICS

- Students stay on track with their classes by regularly checking in with their START counselor.
- Students learn how to improve their study skills and score higher on tests.

### PERSONAL LIFE

- A student's START counselor is available to help them work through life situations.
- Students receive the encouragement they need to keep moving forward.

### FINANCIAL

- Financial assistance is available for tuition, books, transportation, childcare and other school-related expenses.
- Students can learn about other financial opportunities available to help them go to school and stay in school.

For more information, visit [www.kirkwood.edu/projectstart](http://www.kirkwood.edu/projectstart).

RaeAnn Gordon grew up in the small rural town of Westgate, Iowa. Following her high school graduation, she attended a community college in Waterloo for one semester before dropping out. Simply put, she thought only smart kids went to college. The lack of scholarships and not being able to afford college discouraged her. Instead, she had her heart set on being the best kind of mom her kids needed, and so she focused on that.

As time went by and RaeAnn turned 30, thoughts of going back to college kept nudging her to consider jumping back in. However, with a one-year-old and four-year-old at home, she wasn't sure it was the best time. After learning about Kirkwood's Project Supported Training and Retraining (Project START), she realized this was the answer for her. Project START offers academic, personal and financial assistance designed to help students get a degree, graduate and get a great job. She decided to go for it and enrolled in classes in fall 2004.

"I had felt guilty as a mom taking time going to school and doing homework at home. I'd always made being a mom my first priority," commented RaeAnn. "The Project START program helped me remove this barrier. I could schedule classes and be the mom I needed to be for my kids."

Shortly after stepping onto the Kirkwood campus, a faculty member talked to RaeAnn and helped her find her way to a program that really seemed to fit – human services. Despite not knowing a lot about the human services field, she decided to try it. She was surprised to

find out just how much she enjoyed the program.

"I really connected to the class material and really appreciated and respected the faculty at Kirkwood," recalls RaeAnn. As she progressed in her studies at Kirkwood, she felt challenged and motivated to become the best human services worker she could be. Over the next four years, she saw growth in herself as a person. She proudly graduated from Kirkwood in 2006 with an A.A.S. degree in human services.

RaeAnn's educational journey didn't stop there. Inspired by her success at Kirkwood, she transferred to Mount Mercy University and earned her Bachelor of Arts in Social Work, graduating in 2009. She is currently working on her Master of Social Work at the University of Northern Iowa and graduated this spring.

Throughout her time as a student working toward her social work degree, RaeAnn became a very active community member in Cedar Rapids. Something she's especially proud of is her work co-facilitating Moms Off Meth, a support group for moms recovering from substance abuse and drug addiction. She's also been a part of the Partnership for Safe Families Advisory Committee.

RaeAnn currently works as the Linn County director for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. She continues to volunteer her time in the community.

Following in their mom's footsteps, RaeAnn's son started at Kirkwood before transferring to UNI and her daughter will begin her career as a Kirkwood student in fall 2018.





The Project START  
program helped me...  
I could schedule classes and  
be the mom I needed  
to be for my kids.



—RaeAnn Gordon



# FROM THE CLASSROOM TO COLLEGE PRESIDENT

## Farewell to 50 years in education

*Mick Starcevich, Ed.D, Kirkwood President, 2005-2018*

Dr. Mick Starcevich has always had education in his blood. His dad was a math teacher and coach, and that same passion for helping students reach their potential was passed on to his son.

Following his graduation from the University of Northern Iowa, Mick taught for five years before moving to the administrative side of education, where he has remained for the past 45 years. Mick joined Kirkwood in 2003 and served on the cabinet under President Norm Nielsen prior to his presidency. Mick became Kirkwood's fourth president in 2005.

Throughout Mick's 50 years of service to education, his passion has always been helping students. During his tenure, the number of student scholarships awarded annually and the total assets of the Kirkwood Foundation have more than tripled. In fact, more than 14,000 students received scholarships during his presidency. Kirkwood boasts one of the largest community college scholarship programs in the country, and this wouldn't have been possible without Mick's passionate leadership and support. Because of him, thousands of Kirkwood students' lives have been impacted.

### PROUDEST MOMENTS AS KIRKWOOD'S PRESIDENT

Mick has had a lot of proud moments during his tenure as president. In terms of numbers, the transfer, graduation and retention rates have increased every year for the past 10 years in a row. Twenty-five percent of all transfer students to Iowa's three regent universities have transferred from Kirkwood. The Learner Success program has been a big focus and driver behind these numbers.

"We have a good solid system in place at Kirkwood to help students succeed," said Mick.

In terms of innovation and excellence, Kirkwood is second to none. With hands-on training facilities like The Hotel at Kirkwood Center for the Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts programs and the wind turbine for the Energy Production and Distribution Technologies program, students receive real-world, hands-on training and experience.

Education and value are brought to all seven counties served by Kirkwood. The college is ranked No. 5 in the nation for study abroad opportunities, Agricultural Sciences is ranked No. 1 among two-year programs and the Continuing Education program is ranked No. 5 for enrollments nationally. Kirkwood students span 97 Iowa counties, 43 states and 54 countries.

"Kirkwood is THE leader in education, and that's something that should make us all proud," said Mick.

Mick believes paying for college should not be a barrier for students. Therefore, a big focus for him during

### A PRODUCT THAT SELLS ITSELF

With a history that spans five decades, three generations and includes more than 200,000 alumni, Kirkwood has a solid foundation. The college's 3 million square feet of indoor learning space includes The Hotel at Kirkwood Center (one of two teaching hotels in the nation), a 417-foot-tall wind turbine, Iowa's only Dental Technology school, a multidisciplinary healthcare simulation center and Iowa's only Honda training site.

Over the years strong relationships have been built

within the community and with local businesses to bring all of these to fruition. Mick admits one of his biggest fears coming into his presidency was asking for money. He was on the Prairie School Foundation board prior to coming to Kirkwood, but never had to raise money.

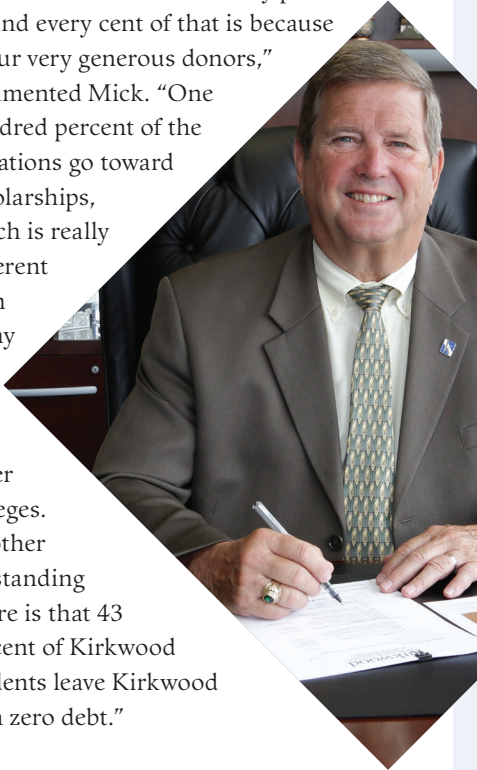
"It turned out to be much easier than I thought because Kirkwood is such a great product," commented Mick. "And, the Kirkwood Foundation board has done a fantastic job helping make connections that lead to more student support."

# THE MICK YEARS

## 2005-2018

his presidency was increasing student scholarships. When he started at Kirkwood, the Kirkwood Foundation awarded about \$740,000 each year. For the 2018-2019 academic year, more than \$3 million is available for Kirkwood students.

“That’s a number I’m really proud of, and every cent of that is because of our very generous donors,” commented Mick. “One hundred percent of the donations go toward scholarships, which is really different than many



other colleges. Another outstanding figure is that 43 percent of Kirkwood students leave Kirkwood with zero debt.”

### LIFE IN RETIREMENT

Kirkwood has been Mick’s passion for the last 15 years. So just what does his retirement hold? Mick plans to stay in the community; he and his wife bought a house locally.

“It’s time to enjoy life and travel. I love to boat, so now it’s time to learn how to fish,” said Mick.

Helping students, faculty and staff succeed will always remain Mick’s fondest memory of Kirkwood. He truly believes Kirkwood is filled with the friendliest people. They, in a sense, have become family.

“It’s been a lot of fun,” he said. “I’ve built a lot of relationships here, and I have made lifelong friends here.”

2005

Kirkwood’s Fourth President Appointed  
Dr. Mick Starceвич becomes president.

2006

Community Training and Response  
Center Opens

2008

Historic Flood Assistance  
More than 1,000 animals rescued during Cedar Rapids’ historic flood found refuge in the Equestrian Center and Animal Health Technology, and 1,100 displaced workers are housed on campus. The federal courthouse temporarily relocates to The Hotel at Kirkwood Center.

Kirkwood Center for Continuing  
Education Opens

Horticulture and Floral Careers Building  
Opens

2009

Jones County Regional Center Opens

2010

First Training Hotel in the U.S. Opens  
The Hotel at Kirkwood Center is a full-service hotel used to train Hospitality Arts students.

2012

Wind Turbine Completed  
The wind turbine becomes the tallest landmark on campus and starts saving the college more than 25 percent in energy costs each year. It also provides students in the Energy Production and Distribution Technologies program with hands-on training opportunities.

EagleTech Opens  
Kirkwood is granted authorization to open an Apple Authorized Campus Store.

2013

Kirkwood Continuing Education and  
Training Center Opens  
The center is a training hub for fire, safety, OSHA, water/wastewater and truck driving certification.

Real World Success a Success  
The Kirkwood Foundation announces \$18.7 million was raised for the Real World Success campaign, which was nearly 50 percent above the goal.

Linn County Regional Center Opens

2014

Cedar Rapids Animal Care and Control  
Opens

Linn Hall Renovated  
A three-year renovation of Linn Hall, built in 1969, is completed.

Washington County Regional Center  
Opens

2015

Kirkwood Center for Lifelong Learning  
Opens

Iowa Hall Remodeled

Kirkwood Regional Center at the  
University of Iowa Opens

Scholarship Record  
For the first time, over \$3 million is available in annual scholarships

New Jobs Created from 260E  
The Iowa New Jobs Training program, 260E, creates more than 1,600 jobs in eastern Iowa.

Among Top Environmentally Friendly  
Campuses  
Awarded the Green Ribbon School designation, the United States Department of Education recognizes the college as one of nine schools in the country for environmental preservation.

First in the Nation for Agriculture Grads  
Ranked No. 1 in the United States for awarding two-year degrees to students in Agriculture.

2016

50th Anniversary  
This year marks a major milestone: Kirkwood Community College turns 50.

2017

Tippie Business Education Center  
Dedication in Nielsen Hall

2018

Richard L. Ferguson Atrium Dedication  
at the Kirkwood Regional Center at the  
University of Iowa

Statler Family Agricultural Center  
Dedication in Washington Hall

Wayne T. Newton Lecture Hall Dedication  
in the Horticulture/Floral Careers Building

# Kirkwood FOUNDATION

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