

BC3 Education Foundation, Inc. celebrates distinguished alumni, scholarship donors and recipients

October 19, 2016

(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College celebrated its distinguished alumni, scholarship donors and the most successful fundraising campaign in its 50-year history during the Oak Hills Dinner on Saturday night.

BC3 recognized Kevin Boozel, and the late Debra Lee Covert McGrath and the late Rae McGrath, as BC3's 2016 Distinguished Alumni.

Boozel, of Slippery Rock, is a Butler County commissioner who graduated with an associate degree in elementary education in 1991. He would later earn a bachelor's degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree from Geneva College.

He volunteers to assist disadvantaged children in Butler, as a firefighter and emergency medical technician in Harrisville, and with a Harmony unit that counsels first-responders after crises. On Saturday night he announced his creation of the Boozel Scholarship for first-generation college students.

Boozel, himself a first-generation college student, becomes the second BC3 scholarship recipient to create his own such financial gift. Boozel follows Tanner McCaw, a 2013 graduate and 24-year-old who this spring founded the McCaw Family Scholarship.

Debra Lee Covert McGrath, who died at age 58 in May 2014 in North Bethesda, Md., was a 1976 graduate of BC3. She would later graduate with the highest honors from the University of Pittsburgh, where she earned bachelor's and master's degrees. During a career that began as BC3's first director of the ACT 101 Equal Opportunity Program, Debra demonstrated a deep commitment to educational opportunities for disadvantaged students.

She married Matt McGrath in 1982 and moved to Washington, D.C., where she established DCM Management, a consulting business showcasing her expertise in organizational management.

Rae McGrath, Matt's mother, taught math and English as an original member of BC3's faculty in 1966.

Rae became chairperson of Humanities in 1971, a full professor in 1978 and was voted Outstanding Faculty Member in 1983. She created the Tuesday College program to enable homemakers returning to the workforce to attend college once a week to earn an associate degree. She served for 11 years as registrar until her retirement in 1995.

She earned a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from Allegheny College, and a master's degree in English from the University of Iowa. She was also an instructor at Duquesne University. She wrote the lyrics of the college's alma mater, "Hail to Thee, Oh Butler College."

The gala also comes in the afterglow of the Pioneer Proud Campaign, in which more than 900 donors pledged a total of \$6.82 million – a 24 percent increase over the \$5.5 million goal.

“I’ve worked at liberal arts institutions, state universities, and I’ve sat in the audience for many of these,” Dr. Nicholas Neupauer, BC3 President, said as visitors finished an aptly-themed Thanksgiving-like meal. “And I will tell you, there’s not a connection to a college like there is here at BC3.”

Fifty donors established new scholarships, bringing to 118 such awards now available - nearly double the number of only three years ago, according to Ruth Purcell, Executive Director of the BC3 Education Foundation Inc., which distributes \$200,000 through the 118 gifts.

“It worked really well,” said Bruce Mazzoni, a BC3 Trustee and member of the Pioneer Proud Campaign Steering Committee. “It was a good example of going out in an organized manner and meeting with the people. It was a great cause and it was identified properly as a great cause. And sure enough, people wanted to support it.”

BC3 also received two \$1 million donations during the campaign, the largest single gifts the college has ever received.

Robert R. Heaton donated \$1 million toward the renovation of BC3’s library, which hadn’t been updated since its opening in 1973. The building was subsequently renamed the Heaton Family Learning Commons.

John L. Wise III and his family donated \$1 million in honor of Wise’s sister, Amy Wise, toward the upcoming expansion and naming of the Amy Wise Children’s Creative Learning Center.