

Award for BC3 president reflects “community connection”

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Dr. Nick Neupauer, president of Butler County Community College, will receive the Jean B. Purvis Community Cornerstone Award on June 21 at the Butler Country Club. The award honors those who have made significant contributions to the wellbeing of Butler County. Neupauer is shown in the Heaton Family Learning Commons on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township.

(Butler, PA) Dr. Nick Neupauer, president of Butler County Community College since 2007, has been selected as the recipient of the third Jean B. Purvis Community Cornerstone Award, which honors those who have made significant contributions to Butler County and who, when recognizing a need, “try to fill it,” the award’s 97-year-old namesake said.

Neupauer will receive the award June 21 at the Butler Country Club, following former recipients Dr. John Reefer, retired chief medical officer and vice president of professional affairs at Butler Memorial Hospital, in 2017; and Larry Berg, a longtime Pittsburgh and Butler radio personality who has served as a board member of more than a dozen Butler County nonprofit organizations, in 2018.

Purvis in 2008 helped to establish The Community Health Clinic of Butler County, now known as the Jean B. Purvis Community Health Center of Butler County, and in the mid-1960s the Visiting Nurses Association of Butler County. She was also a decades-long board member of the BC3 Education Foundation, which raises private funds to support BC3's mission, goals, activities and programs.

The Jean B. Purvis Community Health Center of Butler County is a nonprofit, community-based volunteer organization established to provide primary healthcare, dental care, behavioral health care and health and wellness education to individuals who have no or limited health benefits and do not qualify for other services.

Neupauer's influence, achievements "stretch far"

The award in her name celebrates those who, like Purvis, have improved Butler County through their time, actions, talents and dedication.

"I think we all, when we see a need, try to fill it," Purvis said. "Dr. Neupauer has done so much for the community, as well as for the college. As president of the community college, his influence and achievements stretch far beyond Butler County."

Neupauer is a board member of the Community Development Corporation of Butler County and serves on its executive committee, and is an advisory board member of the newly created Butler County Growth Collaborative. He has served as chair of two Butler County Heart Association walks; with his wife, Tamatha, as co-chair of a Butler County March of Dimes walk; and as chair of the Butler County Chamber of Commerce.

He was also a board member of the Jean B. Purvis Community Health Center of Butler County.

"When I think of Jean, Dr. Reefer and certainly Larry Berg, I think of individuals who are true pillars of the community, who have dedicated their lives to our wonderful community," Neupauer said.

The award, Neupauer said, represents having "a great connection to the community. We take such great pride in being the community's college, which, no question, probably resonates now more than ever. This ties to that community connection."

Under Neupauer's leadership, BC3 has been selected as the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania in three consecutive rankings by Schools.com, in 2015, 2017 and in 2019; and by Bestcolleges.com in 2017.

BC3 expands during president's tenure

BC3 has been recognized as having the best salary-to-cost ratio and the most affordable tuition among more than 40 regional colleges and universities for three consecutive years, according to U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard data.

“There is a lot to be said for Butler County Community College being ranked No. 1 for the third ranking in a row,” said Kimberly Reamer, executive director of the Jean B. Purvis Community Health Center. “That says a lot. He is very attuned to what the town needs and the way it is evolving.”

BC3, founded in 1965, has added or expanded locations in Brockway, Jefferson County; in Ford City, Armstrong County; in New Castle, Lawrence County; and in Hermitage, Mercer County; since Neupauer became president Aug. 1, 2007.

BC3 in August also established its first presence in the city of Butler by creating an office for its coordinator of community leadership initiatives on South Main Street.

“I think that has been a big growth for the town,” Reamer said. “It has been good for the college and obviously for the people in Butler County. He is very interested in making Butler County better. There is a lot to be said for that.”

“Intensely interested in the community”

The Ellwood City native and 1985 Lincoln High School graduate is BC3’s eighth president. His presidency at a single institution exceeds that of any current chief executive officer among Pennsylvania’s 14 community colleges, its 14 State System of Higher Education universities and its four state-related institutions.

“He has been at BC3 a long time and he was elevated from the lower ranks,” Berg said of Neupauer, who 20 years ago began at BC3 as its dean of humanities and social science after serving as assistant professor and chair of the communication department at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

“He worked his way through the organization. As a local man, he understands the local issues and the local organization, the community college. Because he was there. He wasn’t just someone brought in from the outside, trying to learn what the organization and the people were about.”

That organization – BC3 – generated \$147.5 million in added income to Butler County’s economy in the 2016-17 fiscal year, according to an economic impact analysis conducted by Emsi, an Idaho research company; and its Education Foundation has more than doubled its assets to \$18.5 million under Neupauer’s tenure.

And, Berg said, echoing Reamer: “Three rankings in a row as the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania. That can only come about because of his localism, the fact that he has been here a

long time and knows the Butler County community and the needs of the Butler County community.”

“Dr. Neupauer is intensely interested in the community,” Purvis said. “He takes anything that is positive and adds to it.”