

BC3 picks Franiewski, Reddick as 2019 distinguished alumni

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John Reddick, left, an architect at Stantec in downtown Butler, and Linda Franiewski, executive director of the Ellen O'Brien Gaiser Center in Butler Township, will receive 2019 BC3 Distinguished Alumni Awards during the college's Oak Hills Dinner on Oct. 12. Reddick graduated from BC3 in 1984 and Franiewski, in 1986.

(Butler, PA) Linda Franiewski's journey to becoming a 2019 Butler County Community College distinguished alumna began in BC3's Field House, where 35 years ago she played basketball and lifted weights as a visitor and inpatient at the very drug and alcohol treatment facility she now leads.

John Reddick's journey also started at an athletic complex, the Community College of Beaver County's Golden Dome, whose architecture left the BC3 baseball center fielder speechless during a visit between games of a 1979 doubleheader in Monaca.

Franiewski, executive director of the Ellen O'Brien Gaiser Center in Butler Township, and Reddick, an architect at Stantec in downtown Butler, will be honored as 2019 BC3 distinguished alumni at the college's Oak Hills Dinner on Oct. 12.

Franiewski and Reddick join 51 BC3 graduates selected as distinguished alumni since the college's Alumni Association first presented the awards in 2004.

Franiewski, who with her husband of 40 years, Stan, has two children, earned an associate degree in business administration from BC3 in 1986. Reddick and his wife of 32 years, Cindy, have two children. He achieved an associate degree in machine drafting and design from BC3 in 1984.

Distinguished Alumni Awards honor those who have utilized their education and experience from BC3 to achieve significant levels of success and who have a commitment to community service.

“Both of this year’s distinguished alumni recipients demonstrate a strong commitment to the betterment of our community, Linda through her passion to help others with drug and alcohol addiction and John with his varied community involvement,” said Michelle Jamieson, associate director of the BC3 Education Foundation. “We’re proud when BC3 alumni stay in the community and make a tangible difference.”

Franiewski and Reddick are also among the approximately 24,000 former students in 50 states and in Ecuador who have earned at least 45 credits at BC3 since its first class assembled in 1966, Jamieson said. An estimated 43 percent of those former students live in Butler County, according to a 2018 economic impact analysis completed by Emsi, an Idaho research company.

“These are two incredible recipients,” said Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3 president. “Both have excelled professionally, and also – just as importantly – with their volunteer efforts in the community. Ironically, that’s always been a key tenet of our college, community service. More recently, service as the community’s college is a major component of our current strategic plan. The timing of Linda and John receiving this award is perfect.”

“I fell in love” with BC3

While an inpatient client for four months in 1984 at the Ellen O’Brien Gaiser Center – formerly the Butler “A” Center – Franiewski, then 26, believed she was at “one of lowest points of my entire life.” She and other residents spent time in BC3’s Field House twice a week for therapeutic purposes.

“When I was on that campus, I fell in love with it,” Franiewski said. “I felt so serene and so safe. And I was really excited. I wanted to do something. When I finished my program (at the Gaiser Center), I could not wait to start school there.”

Franiewski finished the treatment program and began classes in 1985 at BC3, whose 330-acre campus, she said, “still takes my breath away to this day. The oak trees and the beautiful environment. The nature trails. The campus was so conducive to healthiness.

“I loved every minute of it. I loved every class. I had such wonderful support on campus. It was so powerful and I began to develop my personal confidence and my self-esteem.”

BC3 “gave me so much support”

Franiewski graduated debt-free from BC3 in 1986, then earned a bachelor’s degree in finance from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania in 1989 followed by master of business administration degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1995.

Her personal confidence and self-esteem were nurtured at BC3, which, she said, “gave me so much support in the beginning of my education, which was necessary for me to have the position I now have today. And the experience on campus. And the encouragement. I wanted to go on and on.”

Franiewski has served since 2005 as executive director of the Gaiser Center, which offers drug and alcohol treatment to nearly 1,500 inpatients and outpatients each year, she said.

“If it wasn’t for BC3,” she said, “there is no way I would be sitting here at this desk right now.”

The West Sunbury resident has brought her family to BC3’s campus, and her staff will often bring clients to BC3’s community Shaffer and Imhoff walking trails.

“It’s really close. It is beautiful. It’s welcoming. It’s faith,” she said. “We often send up a handful of clients with a counselor and they will walk the trails and meditate along the way. I absolutely love when I see graduates of Gaiser following the same journey as I did and attend BC3. I believe they are going to make it.”

Franiewski has served on the board of directors of the Butler County Family YMCA Association, on the Butler County Criminal Justice advisory board, and with the Women United of the United Way of Butler County.

“I developed confidence”

Reddick, of Butler and a 1979 graduate of Butler High, chose BC3 to play baseball for Pioneers coach Tom Beckett, whose teams won four Skyline Athletic Conference titles between 1973 and 1978.

“At that time BC3 had very good baseball teams,” said Reddick, a four-year varsity letterman in the sport at Butler High. “A lot of my older teammates had gone there.”

During the fall 1979 season, the Pioneers played against CCBC, which has a domed structure on its campus in Monaca.

“One of my teammates at BC3 said, ‘John, let’s take a walk over there. I want to see that building close up.’ He was telling me how much he enjoyed architecture. I wasn’t saying anything, but I also appreciated what we are looking at. I did not have the confidence to say,

‘This really interests me.’ My teammate was the one who told me BC3 had a very good architecture and drafting program.”

Unsure of his career plans, Reddick temporarily suspended his education at BC3.

Among the sites at which he worked until he enrolled again at BC3 in 1983 were a manufacturing plant, and an engineering office as a “print boy” – a job he landed with the help of a friend who was an engineer.

“My friend said, ‘John, I think you are selling yourself short. You should go back to school and formalize your education.’

“That advice, and that that day on the CCBC campus, stayed with me.”

Reddick returned to BC3, this time to study. He was coached by faculty members and administrators such as Wayne Shaulis, David Blewett, Dr. Orvan Peterson, Dr. William Weisberger, Jack Milson and athletic director Charles Dunaway.

“It was through those instructors that I developed confidence,” Reddick said. “It was not only confidence in doing college-level work, but they convinced me that I could do whatever I wanted to do, whatever I set my mind to do.”

Which, he said, was a reversal from the day he looked at the domed structure with a teammate at CCBC, when “I didn’t even have the confidence to say, ‘I like that.’ It was a world for me that I had difficulty breaking through. My instructors at BC3 gave me that confidence to enter that world.”

“An affordable college experience”

Reddick was hired in March 1987 at Burt Hill, the predecessor to Stantec, where he has worked for 32 years. He serves as president of the Butler Golden Tornado Scholastic Foundation, sits on the Butler YMCA board of managers, and is treasurer of the Butler City-County Connoquenessing Creek Flood Control Authority.

Reddick graduated debt-free from BC3. His son Patrick Reddick, niece Kristie Yenick and sister Sue Schwoebel, are also BC3 graduates.

“BC3,” he said, “is an affordable college experience. It is what you make of it. It can be a stepping stone, as it was for me, or it can also be an end to someone’s formal education before entering the workforce. You can study, learn a skill and get the job you had hoped for.”

Reddick earned a bachelor’s degree in human resource management from Geneva College in Beaver Falls in 1997. He became a registered architect in 2006 and is a member of the American Institute of Architects.

The Oak Hills Dinner also serves to introduce recipients of the BC3 Education Foundation's 126 named scholarships to their donors. The foundation this year will award \$217,000 in scholarships.

Greggory Miller, of Freeport, and the son of BC3 alumna Angela Miller, received a BC3 President's Scholarship this year. The digital audio and video production major at BC3 @ Cranberry in Cranberry Township will be the student speaker at the Oak Hills Dinner.