

# Officials: CEO of company whose technology warmed Olympians brings unique expertise as BC3's newest trustee

Butler Technologies owner Tripodi to help board oversee sites serving 8 counties

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Nadine Tripodi, owner and CEO of Butler Technologies Inc., Butler, is shown at her business on Monday, Nov. 25, 2019. Tripodi, whose company was selected by Ralph Lauren to design, engineer and manufacture innovative flexible heating elements bonded into U.S. Winter Olympians' parkas for the 2018 Seoul Games, has been appointed as a Butler County Community College trustee.

(Butler, PA) Nadine Tripodi, daughter Tess, 7, and son Tristan, 5, would trudge through snow from their new home in nearby Penn Township to "the best hill in the area," one they discovered on a northern tract of Butler County Community College's 330-acre main campus.

It was there, in 1989, where they would ride on sleds – the “old-fashioned kind,” Tripodi said – or on cardboard, “if we could get it to work.”

Thirty winters later, the owner and CEO of a Butler Technologies Inc. company picked by Ralph Lauren to design, engineer and manufacture innovative flexible heating elements bonded into U.S. Winter Olympians’ parkas for the 2018 Seoul Games will apply the technological expertise, entrepreneurial drive and business acumen she developed since those chilly visits to BC3 as the college’s newest trustee, officials said.

Butler County Commissioners Leslie Osche, Kimberly Geyer and Kevin Boozel on Oct. 23 appointed Tripodi to the 16-member BC3 board of trustees, a decision praised by Joseph E. Kubit, board chairman, and Dr. Nick Neupauer, college president.

Tripodi will complete the term of Ray D. Steffler, who with 34 years as a BC3 trustee served longer than any other since the first board was chosen in 1965. Steffler, whose terms spanned seven of BC3’s eight presidents, was in his 20th year as board chairman when he died in February at 82.

Tripodi’s sector of the manufacturing industry has changed repeatedly since the early 1990s, said Kubit, a BC3 graduate and BC3 distinguished alumnus who became chairman of BC3’s board after Steffler’s death Feb. 16.

## “Experience, expertise and passion”

Her “ability to recognize changes in the market and make necessary changes to her business is a great skill,” Kubit said. “This is something that every institution or business has to be able to do not only to survive, but to grow, in meeting its customers’ changing needs and expectations. This applies to the college setting, as well. She will be a great addition to the board.”

Neupauer serves with Tripodi on the board of the Butler County Community Development Corp., whose Butler County Growth Collaborative stresses public participation and engagement, leverages the strengths of numerous organizations and businesses, considers regional needs and promotes partnerships.

“She brings a wealth of experience, expertise and passion, not only from a business perspective, but certainly from a financial and an organizational systems perspective,” Neupauer said. “Nadine has great communication and interpersonal skills. She’s an incredible complement to an already outstanding board.”

Tripodi will serve through June 30, 2021, in finishing Steffler’s term for BC3, which in addition to its main campus in Butler Township has locations in Brockway, Jefferson County; Ford City, Armstrong County; Cranberry Township, Butler County; New Castle, Lawrence County; and Hermitage, Mercer County.

BC3's board of trustees is a policymaking body that provides direction and guidance to the college's president and administration. The primary functions of the board include establishing basic policy, appointing the president and financial control of the institution.

## “Very insightful with BC3”

“Nadine's involvement in building and growing her business, particularly in the technology sector, is something that's going to be important for BC3, its students and the community,” said Osche, chairman of the Butler County board of commissioners. “As we think forward to how we keep our students local and get them into the workforce faster due to the high demand, she will lend tremendous insight to both BC3 and the entire Growth Collaborative.”

Tripodi holds a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership and development from what was Wheeling Jesuit University in Wheeling, W.Va., which recently became Wheeling University.

“Since we moved here, I've felt a strong connection to the college,” Tripodi said, citing BC3's Kids on Campus, Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development opportunities as complements to its associate degree and certificate programs.

“I want to be involved with where the college is going because I really appreciate what BC3 offers to the community, not only for the educational opportunities that it provides, but even in the economic development that is going on in our region.”

BC3, Tripodi said, “has taken a lead and an interest in not only the education of its students, but also the bigger picture of how the college impacts our region and considers what it can do to make this region grow.”

BC3 generated \$147.5 million in added income to Butler County's economy in the 2016-17 fiscal year, according to a 2018 economic impact analysis conducted by Emsi, an Idaho research company that has completed more than 1,800 such studies for educational institutions since 2000.

BC3 has also received economic impact awards in Lawrence and Mercer counties.

BC3 opened an additional location in 2013 in Brockway, which serves Clarion, Clearfield, Elk and Jefferson counties and is the only community college location north of Interstate 80 in the 268 miles between BC3 @ LindenPointe in Hermitage and Luzerne County Community College in Nanticoke. BC3 also created BC3 @ Armstrong in 2015, and plans to move to a new \$5 million downtown Ford City facility in 2021.

“The college just doesn't sit there and offer classes,” Tripodi said. “It's made a huge impact on the lives of people in the region in so many ways. I just keep looking for what's the next thing BC3 is going to do and how much everybody in this region will benefit from it.”

## “Infused into the community”

BC3 will benefit from Tripodi’s business and marketing savvy, according to Geyer and Boozel, Butler County commissioners, BC3 graduates and among the college’s 53 distinguished alumni.

Tripodi “has a strong business mind, and she’s infused into the community as far as business entities go,” Boozel said. “She’s well-connected, with what she did with the Olympics and all the marketing that she has been able to do with her business. She’s very creative, willing to step out and make things happen. Nadine has a great personality for getting out in front of people and marketing whatever she’s doing.”

Geyer said Tripodi will bring “a unique creative and innovative technology perspective to the board that currently does not exist.

“As a self-employed business owner, Nadine knows first-hand the challenges businesses face and knows what employers are looking for in identifying a new workforce and what it takes to run a successful business,” Geyer said. “Her entrepreneurial spirit will help to guide our board in programs and services that can help to equip BC3 students with the technology and tools they will need for the future.”

Butler Technologies designs and manufactures custom-user interfaces and printed electronics – such as the flexible substrates printed with conductive ink that allowed U.S. Olympians to choose between two heating settings from the 10.5-inch by 6.5-inch U.S. flag bonded into their parkas in Seoul.

It also creates force and bio sensors that can be transferred into wearables, and printed switch assemblies for equipment and instruments.

Tripodi, who moved to Penn Township from Castle Shannon, Allegheny County, will join on BC3’s board of trustees Geyer; Kubit, attorney, Montgomery, Crissman, Montgomery, Kubit; Glenn T. Miller, funeral director, Thompson-Miller Funeral Home; Scott A. McDowell, chief financial officer, Blair Strip Steel; and Kenneth DeFurio, president and chief executive officer, Butler Health System.

She also joins William A. DiCuccio, M.D., retired medical director, Sunnyview Nursing Home; Gordon L. Marburger, dairy farmer; Bruce Mazzoni, supervisor, Cranberry Township; Brian K. McCafferty, owner, Kenmac Rentals and Sales; Gail A. Paserba, president, International Quality Consultants Inc.; and Jennifer R. Pullar, attorney, Pullar Legal.

BC3’s board also includes Dr. Bruce Russell, former BC3 interim vice president for academic affairs, and dean emeritus, Slippery Rock University; Carmine A. Scotece, director of development and agency relationships, Alliance for Nonprofit Resources; Nancy H. Staible, retired physician’s assistant; and Joseph Taylor, vice president and general manager, Armstrong Groups of Companies.

Steffler, of Valencia, became a BC3 trustee in July 1985, and 10 months later, at age 49, earned an associate degree in business management from BC3 on the same night as did his daughter, Michelle. He helped to form the BC3 Alumni Association in 1997, created an annual scholarship with his family for BC3 business students in 2000 and coined the phrase "Pioneer Proud."