Exceptional Faculty, Exceptional Stories



Clockwise from top left: Kelly Fielding, Chris Martins, Sarah Theberge, and Jim Wilkins-Luton.

A professor who never planned on going to college, A Web-savvy wiz who stays in touch with students on Twitter, an aspiring academic who turned his back on the ivory tower in favor of more hands-on teaching, and an experienced clinician who takes the mystery out of a much-misunderstood subject—these are the recipients of the 2013-2014 Clark College Exceptional Faculty Awards, which were announced during the college's 2014 Commencement ceremony and officially presented to their recipients during Opening Day activities on Sept. 10.

The Clark College Exceptional Faculty Awards are presented annually to full-time and part-time faculty members. This year

the award recipients include two full-time tenured professors and two part-time adjunct instructors, whose detailed biographies can be accessed through the links below:

- Kelly Fielding: The voice of experience
- Chris Martin: The technophile with human feeling
- Sarah Theberge: The accidental professor
- Jim Wilkins-Luton: The book-lover gone digital

The awards are made possible through an endowed trust fund established by the Washington State Legislature and the Clark College Exceptional Faculty Endowment Fund, which was established in 1993. That fund provides recognition of exemplary work performance, positive impact on students, professional commitment, and other contributions to the college. Nominations can be submitted by Clark College students, faculty, classified employees, administrators, alumni, Board members, and Foundation directors.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Exceptional Faculty Award spotlight: The technophile with human feeling



Chris Martin has gathered the students from his Web Video Production class in the hallway outside their classroom to demonstrate how to set up an interview shot. One student—a burly guy with a baseball cap and gray beard—has affably agreed to stand in front of the camera as the "interviewee."

"Now let's think about camera height, because you can change things a lot depending on the angle you shoot your subject at," Martin says, adjusting the camera's tripod. "Do we want to set it lower and look up at him to give him that godlike angle? Because we all know Steve has a bit of a god complex—just kidding! Just kidding!"

The whole class, Steve included, cracks up, and then Martin continues, raising the tripod as he speaks. "You can do stuff like that," he says. "You can look down on them, too. But typically, we want to meet the subject at their own level, to give them that human feeling."



In many ways, that last line is an apt summation of Martin's teaching philosophy—and the secret to his popularity with students, who nominated him in droves for Clark's prestigious 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award.

"His patience and approach in bringing out the abilities in all his students, from the novice to the advanced, encourages respect for all," wrote one nominator. "His emotional integrity allows him to act as a mentor and to also mirror the importance to students that he is also learning the everchanging aspects of technology."

"If you don't care about who your students are or where they come from or what they actually know—and they know a lot—then you can't help them," says Martin, who teaches both Computer Technology and Computer Graphics Technology classes as an adjunct at Clark, as well as general business courses at Warner Pacific College. "What I like about teaching at Clark is you really get to know the students. When they go through hard times, you know about it."

Martin also gets strong praise for his real-life experience as a web designer and videographer. He has spent more than eight years running his own multimedia studio, creating videos and web content for businesses, nonprofits, and artists. He also produces a regular online documentary video series called *Innovators of Vancouver* that showcases leaders in Southwest Washington.

Martin, who holds a bachelor's degree in Media Arts and Animation from the Art Institute of Portland and a master's degree in Management and Organizational Leadership from Warner Pacific, regularly shares stories from his professional career to illustrate class material. A self-described "big experimenter," he often tries out new tools and methods in his teaching—including Twitter, which Martin has used to create online discussions about class material among his students.

"It's just a way of being accessible," Martins says. "I think it helps students feel connected to me a little more."

Or, to put it another way: It's Martin's way of giving his students that "human feeling" in the digital age.

Learn more about the other 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Exceptional Faculty Award spotlight: The accidental professor



We've all heard the cliché that kids say the darndest things. But people rarely point out its corollary: So do adults. As an Early Childhood Education professor, Sarah Theberge says she is often just as surprised by what her students express in the classroom as she is by what children in the college's Child & Family Studies program say on the playground.

"I'm just surprised over and over again by how many things I hadn't thought of," Theberge says as she stands on that playground surrounded by running children. "The way that students approach the things we talk about reminds me that there's no one right answer to so much of what we're studying. I really do see us as 'co-learners' who are all learning together—and I'm learning right along with them. It's one of my favorite parts of teaching."

It's also one of the things students mentioned repeatedly in nominating Theberge for Clark College's prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award, which Theberge received for the 2013-14 year. The award was announced at Clark's 2014 Commencement ceremony and officially bestowed at the college's Opening Day festivities on September 10.

"She is honest, she is real, she is not only a teacher but an inspiration and a friend to all her students," wrote one nominator. "She brings passion to her work with children and with her students, and ignites the passion in all of us."

Students also mention Theberge's empathy and her strong commitment to serving as an academic advisor to students in the ECE program. When Theberge explains how she became a professor, it becomes clear why she is able to connect so strongly with her students and empathize with the challenges they face: After all, she faced them too.

Theberge never set out to become a professor. "It was the farthest thing from my mind," she says, laughing. Rather, her initial ambition was much more basic: She needed a job.

"I was a single parent without any college background or schooling, and a friend of mine had a childcare center," Theberge says. "I just thought it was a place where I could have my kids there and still work. But from the very first day, I fell in love with it."

A friend encouraged her to enroll in Clark's ECE program. "I said, 'Oh no. We don't do college in my family,'" Theberge recalls. "She literally took me by the hand and dragged me to Clark. And I've never left."

In 1992, Theberge graduated with honors from Clark with an Associate of Applied Science degree in ECE. She went on to complete both a bachelor's and master's program from Pacific Oaks College while working in Clark's CFS program, first as a program aide and then as an adjunct faculty member. Her roles and responsibilities continued to expand over the years, and in 2000 she was granted tenure at Clark. Throughout the years, she has continued to attend conferences and workshops to keep

up-to-date on current teaching practices in her field. She also presents her own research at conferences; currently she has been delving into the complex issues surrounding children's concepts of gender identity. Additionally, she serves on the board of directors for YWCA Clark County and has been instrumental in creating a library at CFS to help promote children's literacy.

It's a long way from the young single mother who just wanted a job. "That's why I love advising," Theberge says. "I hear similar stories to mine from students—people looking for opportunity, looking for help in making their passion a reality. It's just so rewarding to sit with that and to walk alongside them on their journey."

Learn more about the other 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Exceptional Faculty Award spotlight: The book-lover gone digital



Exceptional Faculty Award recipient Jim Wilkins-Luton can tell you the exact moment when the course of his career changed. He was in his final year of graduate studies at Gonzaga University, listening to an English professor discuss Milton in pedantic detail.

At the time, Wilkins-Luton was well on his way to following that professor's path. He'd already been accepted to a Ph.D. program in English literature at Stony Brook University in New York, after which he would aim for a professorship at an elite university where he could happily discuss his own favorite authors in pedantic detail. "It was all lined up," Wilkins-Luton recalls. "I'd been accepted; I had my funding in place; I was going to focus on either medieval or Victorian literature. Everything was going according to plan."

But lately, Wilkins-Luton had begun having doubts about that plan. It started when he took on a part-time job teaching homeless youth to make some money during grad school. "I had

all these stereotypes about what these kids would be like," he says. "I'm ashamed to admit it, but the night before I started the job I was worried they would give me head lice. And then that first day I went to work and came home just exhausted and devastated by these kids. And I started thinking, Maybe the world didn't need another Shakespeare professor. Maybe the world needed people who were willing to teach—to teach the people no one wanted to teach."

Which brings us back to that Milton seminar. Wilkins-Luton found himself staring at the lecturing professor. "I'm not even kidding: This guy actually had leather elbow patches on his tweed jacket, and he was expounding on some particular sentence Milton wrote," he recalls. "And I remember thinking, 'That's my future. I don't want any part of that. What I want to do is help.'"

As fate would have it, there was a poster advertising opportunities to teach English in Japan on the seminar room's walls. Wilkins-Luton called his wife as soon as class let out, and soon after graduation, the two of them moved to Japan, where they spent the next sevenyears teaching English. Once the couple returned to the U.S. and settled in the Portland area, it was a natural progression for Wilkins-Luton to begin teaching at a private international school, and then English as a Second Language at Clark, and then pre-college and college-level English. He earned tenure in 2006.

Wilkins-Luton says he was surprised and honored to receive a 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award. The award was announced at Clark's 2014 Commencement ceremony and officially bestowed at the college's Opening Day festivities on September 10. Student nominators described a professor they called "funny" and "friendly," who "makes all students completely comfortable in the classroom."

"I love to teach," says Wilkins-Luton. "I love the classroom. I love the engagement with students." He is sitting in his

book-lined office at Clark, which amply proves that he hasn't entirely escaped the tropes of the English professor. ("I have a lot more books at home," he admits sheepishly, casting an eye at the seven shelves of volumes arranged in meticulous alphabetical order by author. "These are mostly the ones I don't want my kids reading.")

Yet despite his love of both printed books and face-to-face teaching, Wilkins-Luton recently moved to teaching entirely online. "I think you have to make transitions sometimes to stay sharp," he explains. "Also, I'd been reading some research discussing how the face-to-face classroom favors the extrovert—the person who's willing to raise their hand and speak up in class. In the online environment, the introvert and extrovert become equal. As someone with introvert tendencies of my own, I liked that idea."

Wilkins-Luton says that at first, he was concerned that the online classroom would stifle the sense of humor and personal engagement that he practices in face-to-face teaching. But in fact, he says, online teaching has allowed him to give even more personalized attention to individual students. "If they ask me a question, I send them back a two-paragraph answer," he says. "And yeah, it might have a joke in it. Because you know what? Students don't need gravitas; they need a reason to learn."

Learn more about the other 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Exceptional Faculty Award spotlight: The voice of experience



"I believe in psychology," says psychology instructor Kelly Fielding. "I believe it has value and purpose, and if I can affect a few students who want to make a dent in all the psychological distress in this world, then that's a good thing."

Fielding has seen first-hand the value of psychology: With almost 30 years of clinical experience as a psychologist, he has helped hundreds of patients cope with psychological distress. He brings this experience into the classroom at Clark College, where he has taught part-time since 1988. "I'm at the point where I'm teaching the children of former students," he says with a laugh.

There's a reason why parents are recommending Fielding to their kids—he has developed a reputation as an excellent teacher who incorporates personal and professional stories into his teaching. These are some of the qualities that



earned him the college's prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award. The award was announced at Clark's 2014 Commencement ceremony and officially bestowed at the college's Opening Day festivities on September 10.

"I already loved psychology when I went into [Fielding's] course, but after I took his class, I gained a new love for the topic," wrote one student nominator. "He would use storytelling to weave in the actual facts [of the course material], entertaining some students and allowing those students who required a visual aid to learn the material just as well as everyone else."

Fielding, who has a Ph.D. from Brigham Young University, says he enjoys the diversity of Clark students. "I like the population mix," he says. "I like that there are young kids who are still in high school and adult students who are much older than the 'traditional' college student. I think the older students gain from the energy of the younger students, and the younger students gain from the maturity of the older students. The older students, when they come back [to school], they're very serious."

Fielding says he's felt his own teaching style develop as he's grown older—though not necessarily toward the more serious. "I find that I become more and more open," he says. "The younger you are, the more worried you are about judgment. The older I get, the less I find myself being afraid of what students will think if I share a particular idea or story."

Over the years, Fielding says, the theory and practice of psychology has changed as scientists make new discoveries about the human brain. But when it comes to teaching psychology, some things remain constant—such as students' misconceptions about the subject. "They think psychology is about manipulation," he says. "And they have little to no idea how scientific it is. I teach them the scientific method. I show them how studies are conducted. By the time we're done, I think they understand that science is more than chemistry, cells, and physics. But they also understand how those things play into psychology."

Learn more about the other 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Spring 2014 Classified Staff Excellence Award



Clark College Libraries Acquisitions Specialist Sally Demos

Congratulations to Sally Demos, recipient of the 2014 Spring Ouarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

Sally Demos has provided excellent service to the Clark College Community for the past 29 years. She currently holds the position of Acquisitions Specialist for the Clark College Library. A current member in the Shared Integrated Library, she has also served on the Clark College Foundation Employee Campaign Committee, is a convener for the Library of the Future Committee, a member of the library's Floor Plan Work Group, and the Classified Staff Representative for the Library Leadership Team.

Sally frequently goes above and beyond her basic job responsibilities, displaying her earnest work ethic and commitment to the Clark College Mission. She has been described by her colleagues as "the epitome of efficiency," and her supervisor states that Sally is "thorough, organized and succinct, meeting all deadlines and is often early in finishing her work."

Sally exemplifies lifelong learning by participating in many staff and professional development training opportunities. Her excellent communication skills and wealth of information is a great asset to Clark College, its students, and staff.

Congratulations to all of the spring quarter nominees:

Kate Cascio: Kate has been an exemplary program assistant. She has brought a new level of professionalism to the office. Her ability to work individually to accomplish projects is outstanding. She is quick to take on several additional special projects and duties above and beyond her required assignments. Kate exceeds what is expected of her in all areas of her work.

Vanessa Meyer: Vanessa is doing an excellent job! She is supremely competent. She is organized and handles her responsibilities quickly and efficiently, assuring faculty members do not miss anything that is required. She is not just always pleasant and polite, but always in a good mood.

Brendan Pust: Brendan provides excellent customer service and does everything he can to help. He goes above and beyond each day to provide the best support for students and staff. Brendan never leaves any employee behind. He does his very best to train his employees to provide quality support for students. He has a positive and professional attitude.

Derald Richards: Derald consistently performs at a level above and beyond the scope of his job. Derald is very professional and courteous with his co-workers, students and the general public. Derald is continually looking for ways to complete a task more efficiently. He has been quick to submit ideas and solutions on various issues and will then take the lead on certain projects.

Denise Rotellini: Denise is all about quality work, continuous improvement, and excellent customer service. She does an exceptionally thorough job of managing departmental documents,

libraries, and processes. Denise's knowledge of the college structure, policy and procedures is exemplary. She is always willing to help solve a problem, figure out an answer, or provide support. Denise is always looking for a way to make everyone's job easier and more efficient.

Billie Trimbo: Billie has a certain flair for bringing out the creative and empathetic qualities in others around her. She has been available to us when we needed information, and helpful in problem solving to get the job done. She always goes above and beyond in her work for our department! Billie is spontaneous with her friendship to her coworkers and friends.

Heather White: Heather's performance is the very definition of "excellence." Heather regularly checks in with other coworkers to see how she can help them. She is friendly and helpful to everyone that comes into our office. She works with the office to provide the best possible service to students. She is clear and concise and speaks to people kindly and considerately. She always listens actively and looks at each person as an individual. Heather has the utmost respect for fellow workers and students.

The College Community will celebrate all 2013-2014 nominees and recipients at the Annual Ice Cream Social held in September.

The Classified Staff Excellence Award was established in 2005 and recognizes classified staff who have demonstrated exemplary work performance, outstanding customer service, a positive and cooperative spirit, and special achievements or contributions to the college community. Thanks to the support of the Clark College Foundation, each quarter's recipient receives a \$400 cash award.

Karen Ferguson submitted this article. Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Winter 2014 Classified Staff Excellence Award

Congratulations to **Janice Taylor**, recipient of the 2014 Winter Ouarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!



Tutoring and Writing Center Program Manager Janice Taylor

Janice is the Program Manager for the Tutoring and Writing Center. She started working in the center as a part-time work study student in 2006; was later hired on as a full-time Program Assistant, and recently promoted to Program Manager. Her nominators describe her as a "model of organization and efficiency, regularly doing the work of several people in a single day."

"Janice is constantly initiating new projects to better our department," continues her nomination. "She is widely known

for the respect she shows to her fellow workers and students, and her vigilance about maintaining a positive and professional environment in the tutoring centers. She figures out solutions to complex problems and finds ways of using limited resources more effectively and efficiently."

One employee sums it up by saying, "Janice is truly amazing and a huge asset to Clark College!"

Congratulations to all of the winter quarter nominees:

Sally Demos "Sally has provided excellent service to the Clark College community for the past 29 years. She frequently goes above and beyond her basic job responsibilities because of her work ethic and belief and support of the mission of Clark College. She is an excellent communicator and possesses a wealth of knowledge that has positioned her as the go-to person regarding campus culture and the history of the college."

Joanne Emel "Joanne is always positive and friendly. She responds with an upbeat tone and helpful attitude, and solves problems quickly and to my satisfaction. She makes my job easier by being excellent at her job."

Darci Feider "Darci is very organized and on top of her work. She resolves issues graciously, and takes care of questions and concerns right away. Darci gets along well with her coworkers and is pleasant and professional. She reflects great customer service for the Purchasing Department."

Vanessa Meyer "Vanessa is friendly and helpful. She remembers the needs of faculty members and retains a positive attitude, regardless of the request. She maintains the documents, keys and workspace well."

Derald Richards "Derald consistently performs at a level above and beyond the scope of his job. He is quick to submit ideas and solutions, and will take the lead on projects. Derald can be counted on to deliver and complete a task, no matter how difficult."

Sarah Thorsen "Sarah does anything and everything she can for

our department. She goes out of her way to take care of the students and faculty, and she does so with a smile. Sarah is extremely intelligent and will gladly share advice for how to handle difficult situations, based on her extensive experience teaching special needs students."

The College Community will celebrate all 2013-2014 nominees and recipients at the Annual Ice Cream Social held in September.

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Karen Ferguson submitted this article. Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Presidential Coins



President Bob Knight presents IT Specialist Rick Bartz with a Presidential Coin at the 2014 State of the College address.

In 2007, Clark College President Bob Knight introduced a new honor at Clark College: the Presidential Coin.

The coin is given to faculty and staff members who provide exemplary service to Clark students, the college and the community. The honorees are decided by the president and are kept secret until the names are announced—generally on Opening Day in the fall or during the annual State of the College address.

Four Clark College employees received Presidential Coins during the State of the College address on January 16. They were:

Rick Bartz

In his 19 years as a media specialist at Clark, Rick Bartz has amassed extensive knowledge of the college and its programs,

knowledge that allows him to provide a high level of service. He works part of his shift in the evening and is available to support evening events and faculty teaching night classes. Bartz has also been involved in the installation of the majority of smart classrooms across campus.

"He has an upbeat attitude that is frequently commented upon by the customers he supports," said President Knight. "He is frequently called in to do last-minute setups which he does without complaint."

Mike Godson

Automotive Technology professor Mike Godson has already earned many awards in his field. In 2009, he scored the highest out of nearly 15,000 people on the national L1 (advanced engine performance) exam, earning him L1 Master Technician of the Year award from Automotive Service Excellence and Motor Age Training. He was also chosen to present in the Faculty Speaker Series in 2012. Beginning 2012 and continuing today, he led the department in the curriculum development and program transition to a "stand-alone" T-TEN program. He has also held a leadership role at the national level with Toyota for over a decade.

Mirranda Saari

Beginning as a Program Coordinator 10 years ago, Mirranda Saari has received a number of promotions for her outstanding performance, including to her current role is Associate Director of Admissions and Assessment. She has played a lead role on several key projects: our Lean initiative in student affairs, strengthening community partnerships, and our fall enrollment initiatives. She also represents Clark as a subject matter expert in our PeopleSoft (ctcLink) conversion.

"She strives to improve efficiencies and deliver the best in customer service to our students," said President Knight in presenting the coin. "She has earned the respect and of her staff through listening and advocacy, she has a strong work ethic and a positive attitude."

Jenny Shadley

Working in the Office of Communications and Marketing for more than six years, Graphic Designer/Photographer Jenny Shadley has become a familiar face around the college as she photographs special events, takes portraits of employees and students, and works with different departments to provide high-quality graphic design to support their programs and events.

"She is always willing to jump in and help, whether it as an Art Committee member or managing social media," said President Knight. "She has a consistently positive attitude, thinking of the best ways to promote the Penguin Nation and help others look good."

Fall 2013 Classified Staff Excellence Award



Associate Vice President of Human Resources Darcy Rourk, *left*, congratulates Advising Office Assistant Jessica Bateman on winning the fall 2013 award for Classified Staff.

Associate Vice President of Human Resources Darcy Rourk, left, congratulates Advising Office Assistant Jessica Bateman on winning the fall 2013 award for Classified Staff.Congratulations to Advising Office Assistant Jessica Bateman, recipient of the Fall Quarter 2013 Classified Staff Excellence Award.

"Jessica always strives to meet the needs of the public, community, and co-workers with her high level of service," a nominator wrote. "She has built relationships with vocational counselors whose clients often have short timelines for completion of programs, and they count on her when they need assistance or to connect with an advisor. When working with the public, she will always ask additional questions, ensuring that people leave with everything they need so that they don't have to return or call for something she could have helped with."

Congratulations to all of the Fall Quarter 2013 nominees:

Vicki Cheng "Vicki has been a Clark employee for 31 years

and her reputation reflects her dedication to students, faculty and staff at Clark College. She is a tremendous asset to Clark College in so many different ways in her various roles, and she handles it all with a calm intelligence and a great sense of humor."

Joy Horning "Joy distributed additional desk copies of textbooks to the faculty and consistently reminded us of documents that needed to be submitted. She is helpful, knowledgeable in her subject area and pleasant to work with."

Rebecca Kleiva "Rebecca provides outstanding customer service. Her knowledge and eagerness to learn things that are outside of her normal job responsibilities help to ensure that the customer service that she provides to the public, community and co-workers is top-notch."

Susan Muir "Susan has provided streamlined processes and efficiencies in all of the major projects with which I have been involved with her. I have come to rely on Susan in many areas of work and I know she has consistently provided behind the scenes organization in many projects and events. If it is running smoothly, Susan has had her hand in it."

Derald Richards "Derald's overall job performance at CTC is reliable, excellent and noteworthy. He constantly has a cheerful attitude, and can be counted on to deliver and complete the task no matter how difficult. One of Derald's coworkers describes him as 'super wonderful!!'"

Michael Shingle "Mike works collectively with other units in Student Affairs to better serve students and provide information that may go beyond the scope of the Advising Office. When he can, he will go above and beyond by facilitating the connection between student and campus resources/referrals. His positive spirit and go-getter attitude has been a contagious asset that is seen and heard across Student Affairs."

Sarah Weinberger "Sarah is constantly going above and beyond in her work in the Career Services office. This is evidenced by her ability to balance a variety of tasks on a daily basis. Her creativity is apparent in everything from developing a social media plan for the Career Services office, executing marketing efforts for events, and planning career and job fairs on campus."

The College Community will formally recognize all 2013-2014 nominees and recipients at the Annual Ice Cream Social.

The Classified Staff Excellence Award was established in 2005 and recognizes classified staff who have demonstrated exemplary work performance, outstanding customer service, a positive and cooperative spirit, and special achievements or contributions to the college community. Thanks to the support of the Clark College Foundation, each quarter's recipient receives a \$400 cash award.

Karen Ferguson submitted this article. Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Excellent News



Joe Jenkins basks in his colleagues' applause as he receives his Exceptional Classified Staff Award.

Opening Day is traditionally the occasion for announcing the yearly Exceptional Classified Staff Awards, which recognize two classified employees for their contributions to Clark College. Recipients receive a glass plaque and \$1,000, funded through an anonymous donor's contributions to the Clark College Foundation.

The 2013 Exceptional Classified Staff Award winners were:



Joe Jenkins

Joe Jenkins, Academic Advisor

Joe Jenkins was described in his nomination as having a relatable sense of humor and high energy that keeps students engaged and aware. "He helps others think outside of the box and communicates in an easy, friendly manner," the nomination read. "He is active in identifying student needs, and has advocated for greater course offerings so students can complete their degree requirements in a timely manner. His expertise and knowledge has led to increased student retention and engagement."



Jennifer Wheeler

Jennifer Wheeler, Information Technology Services

In her nomination, Jennifer Wheeler was described as "one of the most diligent, collaborative and consistent members of the college community.

"She is delightful, professional, personable and respectful of the diverse individuals who work and go to school here," the nomination comments continued. "She takes pride in her work, but more importantly in the effect it has on the success of the entire college. She is always upbeat and exemplifies a can-do spirit for Clark College."