

Clark Jazz never skips a beat



Clark College's Jazz Ensemble performing at the 2016 University of Northern Colorado/Greeley Jazz Festival.

For the third time, the Clark College Jazz Ensemble distinguished themselves among the other colleges and universities representing seven states at the 2016 University of Northern Colorado/Greeley Jazz Festival, held April 21 through 23. This year, eight Clark College Jazz Ensemble students received Special Citation for Outstanding Musicianship awards, recognized from the 8,000 festival participants. The Clark students who received awards were:

- Mattias Tyni – trumpet
- Keith Cheek – tenor saxophone
- Anna James – tenor saxophone
- James Powers – trombone
- Jenny Baird – trombone
- Hayden Lilak – bass
- Josh Gonzales – drums
- Sam Niborg – drums



Clark students James Powers and Keith Cheek with John Clayton, bassist and leader of the Clayton-Hamilton Orchestra.

In addition to performing for adjudication and clinic from internationally recognized jazz educators, Clark students also had the opportunity to listen to performances, workshops, and panel discussions presented by luminaries in the field of jazz including the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Houston Person, Joey DeFrancesco, and Ellis Marsalis.

“The experience of visiting the Greeley Jazz Festival this year was exhilarating,” said Clark student James Powers. “It has been said that it can be disappointing to meet one’s heroes, but I can say that that is not always the case. When speaking with some of the learned men of music, I was greeted with humility and kindness. Just as important as the uplifting musical performances, was the realization that these performers were all just regular people who have just practiced more than I have. Overall I would say that as a result of attending the festivities, I have come to several inspiring and informative conclusions about the nature of my craft, and I believe the same can said for my fellow band

members.”



Members of the Clark Jazz Ensemble saxophone pose with iconic saxophonist Houston Person.

Jazz Ensemble Director and music professor Rich Inouye said he could not have been more proud of the band’s performance at the festival. “Many times you work so hard for something like this and when you perform, little mistakes pop up here and there, but this year’s performance at the festival was pure perfection,” he said. “I hope the Clark College community recognizes the work our band students put in to help Clark achieve this distinction. People in the audience shared with me how surprised they were when they found out we were a two-year college! It’s good that the Music Department can represent Clark’s academic distinction at the national level along with programs such as STEM, Speech and Debate, and Journalism.”

UPDATE: Recently, Powers has learned that he has even more reason to be exhilarated: He has been awarded the Festival’s highest award, a tuition scholarship to attend the world-famous Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop at the University of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky. Powers was recognized as one out of only four recipients to receive this prestigious award from the 8,000 participants who performed at the national jazz festival. Powers is currently a resident of

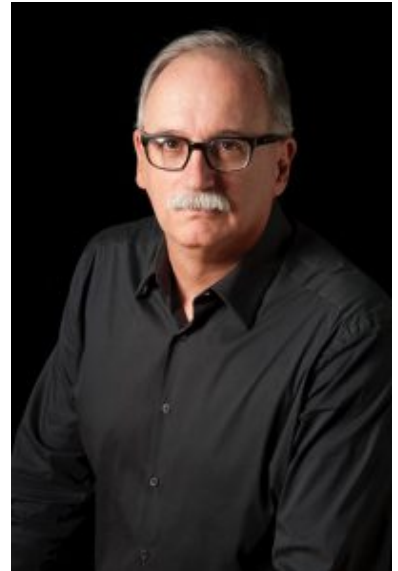
Gresham, Oregon and he graduated from Heritage High in Vancouver; he plans to complete a transfer degree with a major in music this spring. This award is a first for the Clark Music Department.

The Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop is recognized as being one of the best intensive programs for mastering jazz improvisation. The festival features the nation's leading jazz educators and performers and is dedicated to providing an intensive learning experience for musicians of all ages and levels. Theory Classes, Ear Training, Combo Performance, and Master Class Sessions allow the opportunity for attendees to grow and develop to their fullest potential, and each evening attendees get to listen to faculty jazz recitals presented by some of the leading jazz musicians from around the world.

Photos: Richard Inouye

This story was contributed by the Music Department.

Subtext returns to Clark



Author Jim Shepard will appear at Clark's 2016 Subtext festival. *Photo courtesy of Jim Shepard.*

The Clark College Columbia Writers Series is offering a full week of writers, readings, and events on the college's main campus. From May 9 – 12, the college will host well-known authors, as well as readings by Clark students and a poetry workshop with incarcerated individuals. (See full schedule below.)

All events are free and open to the public. Directions and maps are available online. Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event should contact Clark College's Disability Support Services (DSS) Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP). The DSS office is located in room 013 in Clark's Penguin Union Building.

The Columbia Writers Series was launched at Clark College in 1988, bringing local, national and international authors to the college and the region. Information about the Columbia Writers Series is available at www.clark.edu/cc/cws.

Schedule

May 9, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., PUB 161: *Free Minds Prison Poetry Workshop*

Part of an *On The Same Page UNITED* pilot project, Free Minds poetry workshops use writing to connect inmates with members of their communities on the outside. During the event, participants will read through poetry submissions from about a dozen inmates, and comment directly on the page. The poems with feedback will then be returned to the writers. This project, which has been conducted elsewhere around the country, fosters creativity and literacy in and outside prison walls.

May 10, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., PUB 161: *Phoenix Unveiling*

Clark College's national award-winning art and literary journal, *Phoenix*, will unveil its 2015-2016 edition with readings from student authors and free copies available for guests.

May 11, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., PUB 161: *Washington State Poet Laureate Tod Marshall*

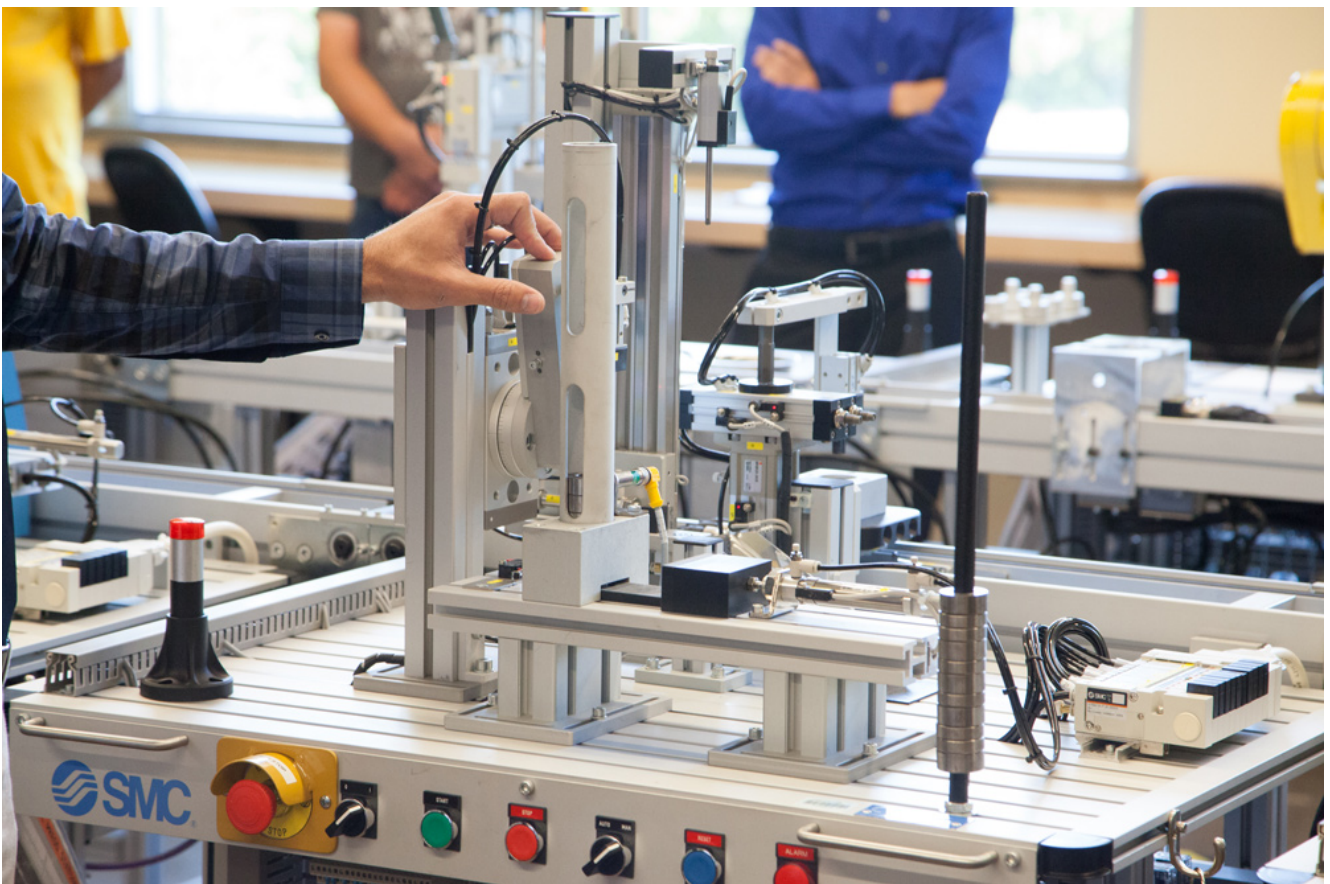
Washington State Poet Laureate Tod Marshall will read from and discuss his work. His books of poetry include *Bugle*, *The Tangled Line*, and *Dare Say*. He has also published a collection of his interviews with contemporary poets, *Range of the Possible* and an attendant anthology of work by the interviewed poets, *Range of Voices*. He lives in Spokane, Washington, and teaches at Gonzaga University.

May 12, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m., PUB 258A: *Fiction writer Jim Shepard*

Jim Shepard is the author of seven novels, including most recently *The Book of Aron*, which won the Sophie Brody Medal for Achievement in Jewish Literature from the American

Library Association and the PEN/New England Award for fiction, and four story collections, including *Like You'd Understand, Anyway*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award and won The Story Prize. Five of his short stories have been chosen for the Best American Short Stories, two for the PEN/O. Henry Prize Stories, and one for a Pushcart Prize. He teaches at Williams College.

A RAMP to tech jobs



Clark College's popular mechatronics program combines electronics with mechanized processes to prepare students for jobs in today's high-tech manufacturing.

Clark College has received a \$200,000 grant from the National

Science Foundation to create a new Rural Access Mechatronics Program (RAMP) that will help students in rural areas become skilled technicians in the high-demand field of advanced manufacturing.

“Thanks to this funding, Clark College will be able to provide greater access to our highly regarded Mechatronics program to students living anywhere in Clark’s service district,” said Clark College Dean of Workforce, Career and Technical Education Genevieve Howard. Clark’s service district includes Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties.

During the grant’s first year, Clark College faculty will develop a curriculum of seven “hybrid” classes that compose a Certificate of Completion in Mechatronics Fundamentals. Hybrid classes are taught partially in a face-to-face classroom, and partially online, allowing students in remote locations to attend classes without commuting long distances each day to a college campus.

Many regional employers have expressed a need for additional technicians trained in mechatronics, a discipline that focuses on the integration of mechanical and electronic components in modern manufacturing and utility environments. Employers who wrote letters in support of this project include Boeing, Insitu, NORPAC, Silicon Forest Electronics, Vancouver Energy, the Columbia River Economic Development Council, and the Southwest Washington STEM Network.

“The RAMP program is another example of how Clark College is addressing the workforce needs of advanced manufacturing businesses,” said Jeanne Bennett, CEO of the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council, which also supports the project. “The hybrid/online program will enable more students to receive training, and this will increase our region’s pool of skilled mechatronics technicians.”



The program will begin accepting its pilot cohort of students in the fall quarter of 2017. Given Clark's strong focus on hands-on learning, the college is currently examining potential options for bringing lab facilities to students in remote areas of its service district. These could include anything from suitcase-sized training modules to a traveling "lab" on wheels.

Clark College received this grant through the NSF's Advanced Technical Education program, which was created to improve and expand educational programs for technicians to work in high-tech, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. The grant proposal was developed by mechatronics professors Chris Lewis and Ken Luchini with Director of Grant Development Lori Silverman and Howard.

"The RAMP grant is exciting because it validates the ability of Clark College faculty and staff to develop a grant proposal that is competitive on a national scale in an academically rigorous process," said Howard. "Our hope is that we can replicate this hybrid model in other areas of career and technical education, potentially with further NSF assistance."

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Real help from the “real world”



During his keynote speech at Clark College's 2016 Advisory Breakfast, Vancouver businessman Don Brunell holds up a transistor radio to show how quickly technology can become obsolete.

Last Wednesday Clark College honored the more than 250 men and women from over 160 business and organizations who serve on the college's 28 advisory boards for professional and technical programs. These industry professionals provide “real-world” guidance for Clark's professional and technical programs to ensure students receive current, cutting-edge training to succeed in the workplace and enhance the regional workforce.

This year's breakfast featured guest speaker Don Brunell, a partner at the Vancouver communications firm Brunell Creative. He is the retired president of the Association of Washington Business (AWB). Nationally, he has served as chair of the National Industrial Council for the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the Conference of State Manufacturing Associations (COSMA), and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board under Governors Lowry, Locke and Gregoire. He currently serves on the boards of AAA-Washington, Forterra, *Washington Business Week*, Identity Clark County and WGU-Washington.

"It's really important at the state level to have a connectivity with local community and technical colleges because this is really where the rubber meets the road," said Brunell. "There are a lot of good things happening in Washington, and it's because our community and technical colleges listen to the folks who are our customers."

Brunell also emphasized the need for the community to serve as advisors to the college by participating in these committees, as well as to be good advisors to legislators.

"The advanced manufacturing center [at Clark] is a very important project to have in this county," he added. "The [Clark College at Boschma Farms] north campus is where a lot of skills training will be. We need to have those types of investments here, or we will not be able to keep large businesses like WaferTech, SEH and Georgia Pacific here, along with the small businesses."



Clark graduate
April Gapsch.

The event also included speeches from April Gapsch, a Clark graduate and chair of the Business Medical Office Advisory Committee, and from current welding students Peter Smith and Pachino Palmore. All three speakers were able to attend Clark as a result of the Worker Retraining Program. Smith and Palmore will graduate in June.

“For many years, I had a dream of going to college, but didn’t think it was possible. Then I found myself in a unique situation, without a job or prospects,” said Gapsch. “The local workforce office referred me to Clark College and the Worker Retraining Program. I was enrolled the next day, and graduated with honors last summer. I was hired by Peace Health five months after graduation.”



Welding students Pachino Palmer and Peter Smith show off some of the work they've produced in their classroom.

Clark College offers more than 25 professional and technical education programs. Currently, 39 percent of credit-seeking students enrolled at Clark College are pursuing a degree or certificate in professional and technical education. In 2014-2015, 80 percent of students who completed a career and technical degree or certificate, or earned 45-plus college-level credits prior to leaving, were employed within nine months.

Clark College Advisory Committee members, who are appointed by the administration of a college, provide direction and specifications for current professional and technical education programs, and help identify emerging occupations and skills needed. For more information about the college's advisory committees, visit www.clark.edu/advisory.

More photos from the event can be found on our Flickr page.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Stating the case for trees



Members of the community help plant a Black Hills Spruce during Clark College's 2016 Arbor Day celebration. *Left to right:* Campus Tree Advisory Committee member Jim Wasden, Director of Facilities Services Tim Petta, retired groundskeeper Skip Jimerson, Vice President of Administrative Services Bob Williamson, and Washington State Forester Aaron Everett.

On April 13, Clark College celebrated nature at its annual Arbor Day event and tree planting.

The event, which was free and open to the public, featured the addition of a Black Hills Spruce to the campus's beautiful 90-acre arboretum. This was just the most recent effort by the college to include all 50 state trees in the campus arboretum: The Black Hills Spruce is the official state tree of South Dakota. With the addition of this tree, the arboretum contains trees representing 40 states.

Starts of several more state trees were present at the

ceremony; these donations are still too young to plant outdoors, but will be tended in the college's greenhouse until they are ready to take their respective places in the arboretum.



Left to right: Campus Tree Advisory Committee member Tim Carper, retired groundskeeper Skip Jimerson, and Facilities Services employee (and Skip's wife) Lori Jimerson.

The event took place at the southeast corner of the Frost Arts Center, near the north end of the Royce E. Pollard Japanese Friendship Garden. Jim Wasden, a retired member of the U.S. Forest Service and current member of the Clark College Campus Tree Advisory Committee, gave the keynote speech. Recently retired groundskeeper Skip Jimerson, who was instrumental in Clark's efforts to include all 50 state trees, returned to campus to participate in the event and ceremonially shovel dirt onto the new tree.

The event featured the presentation by Washington State Forester Aaron Everett of the college's Tree Campus USA designation by the Arbor Day Foundation for the sixth year in a row. Tree Campus USA colleges must meet rigorous standards in five separate areas to earn this designation.

The arboretum can be explored online at trees.clark.edu, which features an interactive, mobile-friendly map to view the locations of and access descriptions for most trees on campus. This includes a six-decade-old Scarlet Oak and the campus's iconic Shirofugen blossoming cherry trees, the latter of which are celebrated each year at the college's annual Sakura Festival.

Photos: Clark College/Hannah Erickson

Jacobsen named new trustee



Jane Jacobsen

Jane Jacobsen has been appointed to the Clark College Board of Trustees by Gov. Jay Inslee. Her term began February 23 and ends September 30, 2019.

“I am thrilled and honored to have been named a trustee of Clark College,” said Jacobsen. “It is an integral part of our community and essential for an increasing number of students.”

A resident of Vancouver for the past 27 years, Jacobsen has long been an influential presence in the Pacific Northwest. She was the founding executive director of the Confluence Project (now known simply as Confluence), which creates educational art installations in Washington and Oregon that connect people with places. Jacobsen led that organization for 12 years and now serves as its board treasurer.

Jacobsen was instrumental in bringing nationally recognized speakers to Vancouver's Marshall Lecture Series, including Bill Richardson, Madeline Albright and Tom Brokaw. Jacobsen has also co-developed programs and exhibits to celebrate the history of the Pacific Northwest through folk art. In 2001, Washington State Governor Gary Locke appointed Jacobsen to a four-year term as one of 13 commissioners on the Columbia Gorge Commission, which oversees the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act.

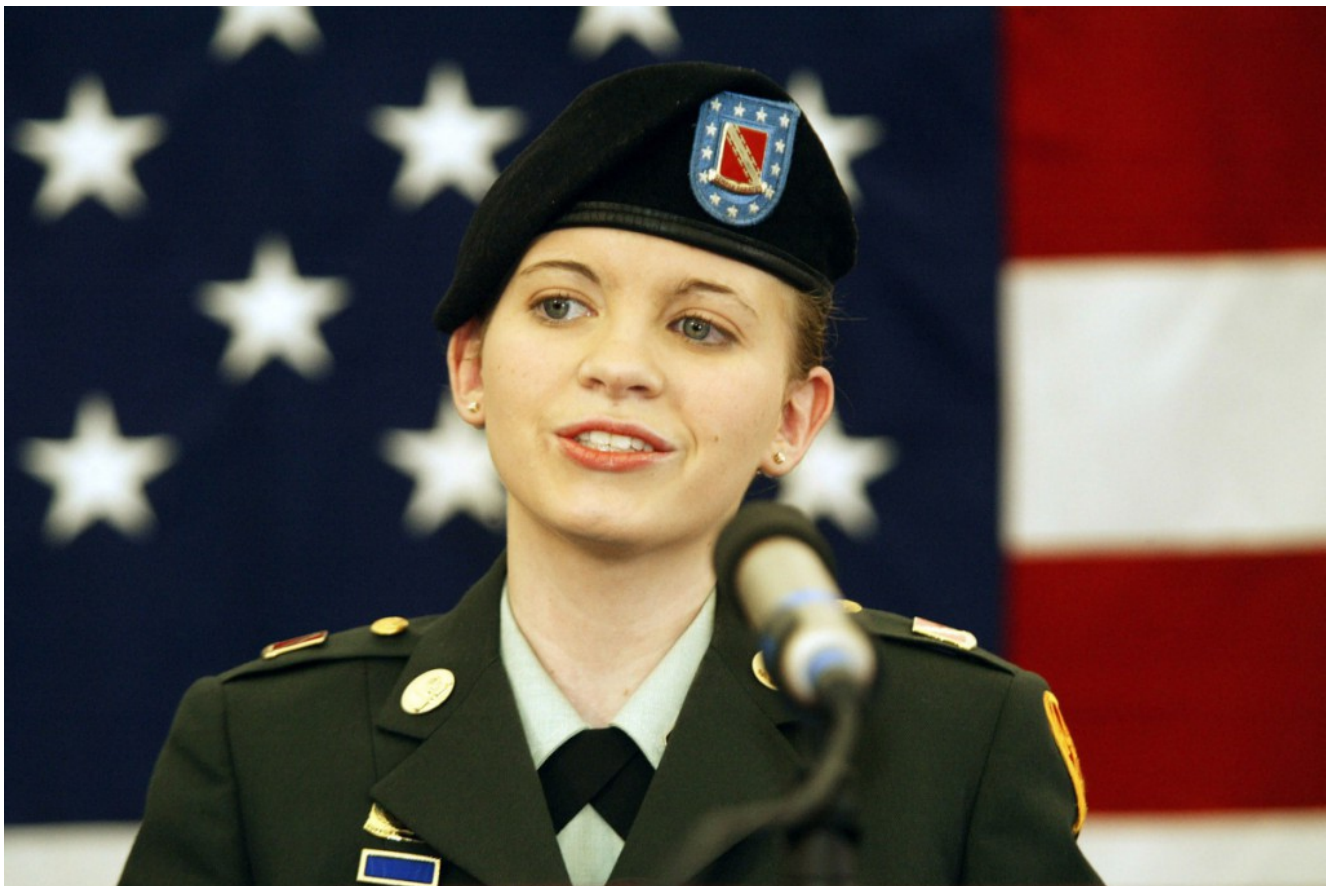
Currently, Jacobsen is a private consultant for a waterfront development project in downtown Vancouver. She is also board president of Friends of Fort Vancouver and serves on the Columbia Land Trust's advisory board and development committee, as well as on The Children's Center's advisory board. She lives in Vancouver with her husband, Paul; they have two grown sons.

Jacobsen earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Arkansas and her Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Vermont. She fills the vacancy left by Mike Ciraulo, who left his position at Clark County Fire & Rescue in September to become chief of the Pendleton (Oregon) Fire Department.

Jacobsen joins other trustees Vancouver City Councilor Jack Burkman; Royce Pollard, who served as mayor of Vancouver for 14 years; Jada Rupley, administrator consultant and former educator; and Rekah Strong, chief of operations and equity at United Way of the Columbia-Willamette in Portland.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Jessica Lynch to speak at Commencement



Pfc. Jessica Lynch will address Clark College's Class of 2016. Lynch was taken prisoner during the Iraq war and was held for over a week before being rescued by U.S. Special Forces. REUTERS/Blake Sell

Former prisoner of war Jessica Lynch will share her experiences overcoming obstacles and her belief in the important role of education with the Clark College Class of

2016 as the college's Commencement keynote speaker on June 16.

"Jessica Lynch is a wonderful example of how strength of character can help people survive the hardest of situations," said Clark College President Robert K. Knight. "I believe she will make a strong connection with our students."

Clark College's Commencement ceremony is scheduled to be held on the evening of June 16 in Sunlight Supply Amphitheater. Tickets are not required to attend.

About Jessica Lynch



Jessica Lynch is a former Private First Class (PFC) in the United States Army and a former prisoner of war. On March 23, 2003, she was injured and captured by Iraqi forces after her unit was ambushed in Iraq. She was rescued after nine days in captivity on April 1, 2003, by U.S. special operations forces. Lynch's rescue was the first successful rescue of an American POW since World War II.

Today, Lynch speaks to various groups around the United States about overcoming her obstacles and how perseverance helped her survive. Lynch further explains that despite the most difficult circumstances – whatever they might be – a positive outlook and determination can truly help individuals live fulfilling lives and accomplish their goals.

Lynch has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and a Master of Arts degree in Communication Studies. In 2014, she toured the U.S. promoting *Virtuous*, a faith-based movie by JC Films. She recently filmed her second faith-based movie titled *One Church* and will be filming her third movie in March 2015.

Lynch has appeared on *Good Morning America*, *Today Show*, *CBS Morning Show*, *Huckabee Show*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, *David Letterman Show*,

Fox, *Prime Time on ABC with Dianne Sawyer*, E News!, CBN, and various local networks throughout the country. She has appeared on the cover of numerous magazines such as *TIME* and *People*. She has been named West Virginian of the Year as well as *Glamour's* Woman of the Year.

Battling stereotypes, they found success



Qi Wu and Tammy Senior are Clark College's representatives to the 2016 All-Washington Academic Team.

Two outstanding Clark College students were selected to attend the 2016 All-Washington Academic Team Recognition Ceremony,

held on March 24 at South Puget Sound Community College in Olympia, Washington. Tammy Senior and Qi Wu are two of just 66 students from community and technical colleges across the state to receive this honor, which recognizes students for their academic excellence and service to the community.

At first glance, Senior and Wu don't seem terribly similar. One is young even by the standards of Running Start, a program that allows high schoolers to take college courses; the other is coming back to college after serving four years in the military. One has spent her whole life in Vancouver; the other has lived in more countries than she can count on one hand.

But on closer inspection, certain parallels become clear between the two young women: They're both fascinated by science and technology. They both are driven students who make time in their busy schedules to serve their communities. Both have had to challenge others' assumptions and figuring out creative ways to get around obstacles in their educational journeys. And so far, both are succeeding impressively.



Clark student Qi Wu stands before the college's new STEM Building, slated to open in fall 2016.

Wu's obstacles began surfacing when she and her mother emigrated from China to the United States. Wu, then a sophomore in high school, struggled to maintain her grades

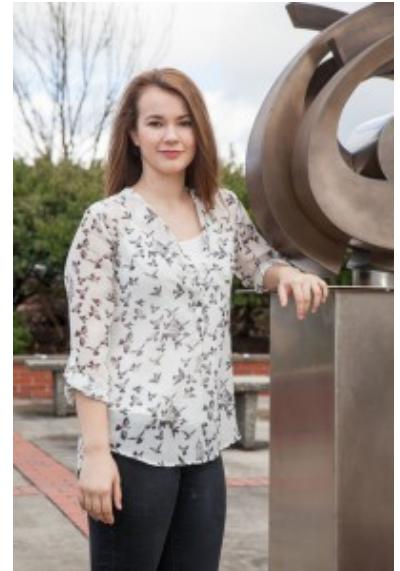
while learning a new language in a new culture. She also found herself confronting gender stereotypes, as classmates and teachers assumed she would be more interested in subjects like art and the humanities instead of math and science.

“When I was growing up, I was always better in physics and chemistry,” she said. “I like numbers, I like logic. When I came to Clark and took my first engineering course, it was like, ‘Wow, this is where I belong!’”

However, soon a new hurdle appeared. Wu, whose mother had remarried and had another child, realized her family could not afford to pay for her college education. Hoping to support herself, she enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 2010 as an aviation mechanic, and took every opportunity to earn educational credits and develop new skills—despite the doubts some had of the petite young woman’s abilities.

“When I got transferred to Japan, my supervisor told me, ‘Well, you can do the desk job here, because you’re a girl,’” Wu recalled. “And I said, ‘No. I want to do the job I trained for.’”

Wu said that overall, she’s grateful for the opportunities the military provided her to travel and learn skills that will help in her electrical engineering career. She’s currently receiving scholarships from Clark, which allows her to save her military education benefits for the more-expensive, four-year institutions she hopes to attend one day to earn her master’s degree. She also works in Clark’s scholarship office herself, and spends weekends training as a Naval Reservist.



Clark student Tammy Senior says she's been impressed by how welcoming the college was to her, even when she took her first class at age 14.

Like Wu, Senior's challenges also began in high school, but they were of a different nature: She felt stifled. "I wasn't being challenged enough," she recalls. "I took a class at Clark and found it so much better."

Senior's family couldn't afford to pay for a full load of college classes out of pocket, and when the 14-year-old visited Clark's scholarship office, she discovered she was too young to qualify for financial aid or scholarship opportunities. Then, the scholarship staff offered a new possibility: Perhaps Senior could enroll in Running Start, the Washington State program that allows eligible high school juniors and seniors to take college classes tuition-free. The only problem was that Senior was still a freshman. She wound up skipping the 10th grade in order to qualify, enrolling at Clark as a full-time student at age 15.

“It was definitely interesting,” Senior, now 16 and set to graduate in the spring, said with a grin. “But Clark’s pretty welcoming, and I really thrived in the community here.”

Senior has maintained a 4.0 GPA while taking classes in Clark’s challenging Honors Program, volunteering with her church, teaching private music lessons, and serving as the vice president of leadership for Clark’s chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges. She’ll be 17 when she enters a university—potentially with junior standing, depending on where she attends.

“People ask me, ‘Why don’t you enjoy your high school years?’” Senior said. “But I’m a planner. I think ahead. My mother wasn’t able to finish school because she started a family. I know I have a lot of school ahead of me, and this is a way to speed things up.”

Senior hopes to become a neurologist, a goal developed when her beloved grandmother suffered a series of debilitating strokes in 2014. Like Wu, Senior faced some skepticism about her ambitions.

“When I tell people I want to pursue a career in neurology, sometimes they look at me strangely and say, ‘Oh, why don’t you go into nursing, so you have time for a family?’” she said. “But I know I can do it. I can have a family. I can have the career of my choice. I just have to work hard. And you know, they would never tell a male student that.”

Both students say they appreciate the support they’ve found at Clark. “I like the diversity here,” says Wu, a first-generation college student. “Engineering professor Izad [Khormae] is from Iran. My physics teacher is from Russia. I think half the STEM faculty are women. And then in my classes I’ve met a few other veterans. You get so many different experiences here, different cultures.”

Wu and Senior were honored for their achievements at the All-

Washington Academic Team induction ceremony on March 24, 2016, in Olympia, where Gov. Jay Inslee was the keynote speaker. The All-Washington Academic Team is a program of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society of two-year colleges. Team members are eligible for numerous scholarships, including transfer scholarships at most four-year universities in the state.

“It is such an honor,” said Senior, sitting with Wu during a break between classes.

“It’s nice for your hard work to be recognized,” adds Wu.

“Yes, you feel like your hard work is finally paying off,” said Senior.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Bill Clinton speaks at Clark College



Former President Bill Clinton speaking at Clark College.

Normally, the first day of spring break on Clark College's main campus feels like the calm after the storm. The parking lots are empty, faculty and students are home recovering from finals, and some offices are closed or on reduced hours. But on March 21, the campus swirled with activity after the Sunday announcement that former U.S. President Bill Clinton would be speaking in Gaiser Student Center that Monday evening.

Clinton was stumping in support of his wife's 2016 presidential campaign, which had rented the college's facilities for his appearance. He also appeared at Spokane Falls Community College and at Portland, Oregon's Powell Books during the day as part of a whirlwind tour of Washington and Oregon in advance of Washington's Saturday primary caucuses.

Lines began forming in the early afternoon for Clinton's scheduled 5 p.m. appearance. By 3:30, the line stretched down the stairs on the south side of the Penguin Union Building and around the north walkway of Hanna Hall. In total, about 750 people crowded into Gaiser Student Center, with another 150

packed into PUB 161 to watch the speech as a live stream.



Former President Bill Clinton addressed a packed Gaiser Student Center during a campaign stop for his wife's 2016 presidential bid.

While the bulk of the 42nd President of the United States' speech concerned why his wife should be the 45th president, he did also touch on subjects relating to Clark College. "Look at this institution where we are right now," he said, gesturing to the walls of Gaiser. "If America worked the way community colleges did, we'd have a lot fewer problems. It's open to everybody. It's constantly changing to adapt to the future. ... It's about creating a future where everybody has a chance."

Clinton also emphasized the economic importance of increasing the amount of advanced manufacturing in the U.S., saying, "It's the most productive part of every economy." Clark College is currently planning a new facility teaching advanced manufacturing skills at its future location in Ridgefield, Clark College at Boschma Farms.

Clinton's hour-long speech touched on access to higher education as well. "Every bit as much as a house, a degree is a lifetime asset," he said, prompting cheers from a crowd that contained many Clark College students and employees.

This was a busy week for Vancouver. On Sunday, Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders spoke to a crowd of approximately 8,000 at Hudson's Bay High School, just across the street from Clark.

Photos: Clark College/Wei Zhuang

The ripple effect



Renee Newman returned as this year's program emcee.

On March 9, community members gathered in Gaiser Student Center to celebrate three outstanding women for their dedication to Southwest Washington. The 2016 Iris Awards ceremony honored Vancouver City Councilmember Anne McEnerny-Ogle; Katherine Garrett, the Housing First Program Director at Lincoln Place; and Heidi M. Johnson Bixby, owner of Johnson Bixby & Associates.

This annual recognition of Southwest Washington women has a long tradition in this community. The event began in 1985 at Clark College as a photography exhibit during Women's History Week. Over the years, it developed into a larger awards program and ceremony called the Southwest Washington Women of Achievement Awards. In 2012, the Iris Awards were introduced with the same focus as previous events: celebrating the lasting and far-reaching contributions of women in the community.

The 2016 Iris Award Recipients

Katherine Garrett



Katherine Garrett, *left*, with her nominator, Vancouver's Downtown Association Executive Director Lee Rafferty.

The first woman to be honored during the evening was longtime

advocate for the homeless Katherine Garrett, who recently moved from the Vancouver nonprofit Share to the housing program Lincoln Place. During her 14 years at Share—nine of which were spent leading the Share House and Share Outreach programs—Garrett helped transform the organization into one of the major voices for the homeless in Clark County. In her new leadership position at Lincoln Place, a permanent supportive housing program for chronically homeless individuals, she serves as the Housing First Program Director.

Garrett has served as both a strong advocate for the homeless in Clark County and as a liaison between that population and the local business community, working with the Safety Committee of Vancouver's Downtown Association to help resolve concerns. As the issue of homelessness has gained prominence in recent months, Garrett has been at the forefront of helping city leaders and others understand the issues and make good policy decisions.

"Fourteen years ago, I was given the tremendous opportunity to make a difference each day in the lives of those who are hungry, homeless, and in need of a hand up," said Garrett as she thanked all those who have supported her throughout her career. "If my work has somehow made people's lives a little better, then I feel it's been a success. I would be extremely happy if the outcome of receiving this wonderful award was that others are inspired to make a difference in the lives of the hungry and the homeless of our community. Just one positive action can have a ripple effect."

Anne McEnery-Ogle



Anne McEnery-Ogle, *left*, with her nominator and fellow Councilmember Jack Burkman.

Second to be recognized was Vancouver City Councilmember Anne McEnery-Ogle, who came to the Vancouver City Council after a 30-year career as an educator during which she received the Milken Foundation Educator Award and was chosen as Oregon Math Teacher of the Year. She serves on a diverse number of boards and is an active volunteer in a number of organizations in Southwest Washington.

Beyond her work on the City Council, which includes the role of Mayor Pro Tem, McEnery-Ogle is the Chair of the C-Tran Board of Directors, a member of the Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors, and the Vice-Chair of the Clark County Historical Museum. McEnery-Ogle also serves as Chair for the Fort Vancouver District for the Boy Scouts of America.

As her nomination stated, there are very few volunteer organizations in Southwest Washington that have not benefitted from McEnery-Ogle's energy, enthusiasm, and leadership, though she has frequently focused on issues particularly important to women and underrepresented groups. She has worked with the League of Women Voters to help educate the community on important issues and elections, and on the Community Military Appreciation Committee in support of veterans and their families. She is a Leadership Clark County graduate and alumni award winner.

“It’s incredible to look out into the audience into the eyes of so many people who work tirelessly for their community,” stated McEnerly-Ogle as she took the stage to accept her award. “Women’s lives today represent a rainbow of opportunities. Sometimes we clearly understand where we are going, and sometimes we are in the middle of something we never expected.

I deeply appreciate this award and your acknowledgment of my work. I’m having a lot of fun. I am so blessed.”

Heidi Johnson Bixby



Heidi Johnson Bixby, *left*, with her nominator and last year’s Iris Award winner Lisa Schauer.

Heidi Johnson Bixby was the final honoree of the evening, receiving an award in a brand-new category. The new Iris Legacy Award recognizes the many women who have continued to make a difference in our community and create a lasting legacy since receiving their initial Iris or Woman of Achievement award. Since 1985, the Iris and Women of Achievement awards have been bestowed on more than 200 women in Southwest Washington.

Bixby is owner of Johnson Bixby & Associates, a comprehensive financial planning firm with locations in Vancouver and Longview. She received a Women of Achievement award in 2004

for her community involvement and business leadership. Beyond her success as a business owner, Bixby serves the community in a variety of roles. She is currently chairs the Board of Directors for Columbia Springs, which provides over 5,000 kids and adults annually with the opportunity to get outdoors and to learn more about the natural world.

Bixby also supports ARC of Southwest Washington, where she and her team have made gift-wrapping of donated items an annual tradition. She is the treasurer for H-RoC and Global Sojourns Giving Circle. Other organizations Bixby supports with her time and resources include Vancouver's Downtown Association, Community Home Health & Hospice, Identity Clark County, the Nonprofit Network of Southwest Washington, the Clark County Skills Center, and Children's Center. In addition to her involvement in the community and business accomplishments, Bixby is a world traveler and photographer who has visited more than 30 countries.

"It's incredible to be the first recipient of this award. It means a lot to me because I do what I love," said Bixby as she received the Legacy Award. "I've lived in Vancouver for nearly 40 years. To me, it is more than where I live. It is my family. It is a piece of me. And I wholeheartedly love giving back. If I can inspire and pass on even a fraction of what has been passed down to me, I'll be happy to keep the ripple effect going."

New sponsor and new award

Also new this year was the addition of H-RoC as a sponsor of the Iris Awards. H-RoC was formed in mid-2011 as an independent, non-partisan political action committee specifically to advance women leaders in Southwest Washington. Following this mission, H-RoC announced the addition of another new Iris Award category for 2017 that will honor women who currently serve or have served in public office.

Nominations for the 2017 Iris Awards will open this fall. Anyone may nominate a woman making a difference in one of four areas: service in the public sector, service in the private sector, philanthropic leadership, and service in public office. Up to four Iris Awards may be presented annually. One recipient may be selected in each of four areas. Anyone may submit a nomination. More than one person may submit a nomination for the same nominee or provide letters of recommendation.

For more information about the Iris Awards, visit clark.edu/cc/irisawards.

View photos from the event on our Flickr page.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley