

Student Club Prepares for Veterans Day



Clark College Veterans Club member Steve Mitchley hangs a ribbon from the Honor Tree that will be displayed during this year's Veterans Day celebration.

Members of the Clark College Veterans Club and Associated Students are staffing a table outside of Gaiser Student Center from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. all week in advance of the college's Veterans Day celebration on November 10. Members of the college community are invited to write holiday cards to be sent to members of the military serving overseas. They can also add ribbons to an Honor Tree that will be displayed during Monday's celebration.

Ribbons are color-coded.



- **White ribbon:** in memory of a loved one who gave/lost their life in service
- **Blue ribbon:** in honor of a loved one who is serving
- **Red ribbon:** you are currently serving or have served
- **Yellow ribbon:** general support and thanks to all veterans and service members
- **Black ribbon:** in recognition of someone who was a POW/MIA
- **Purple ribbon:** in honor of Purple Heart recipients



A Clark College student hangs a ribbon on the Honor Tree and fills out a holiday card to be sent to a servicemember overseas.

This is the second year that the college is hosting a Veterans Day celebration. Last year, the event included the presentation of a grant from the Community Foundation for

Southwest Washington that helped start and staff the college's Veterans Resource Center, which opened earlier this year.

The college is always closed on Veterans Day, so each year the celebration takes place on the day before or after the official holiday. This year's Veterans Day celebration takes place 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in Gaiser Student Center. In addition to the honor tree and card-writing station, it will include a Presentation of the Colors, guest speakers, free food and refreshments, and kid-friendly activities. It is open to the all members of the Clark College community, regardless of military status, and to the greater Southwest Washington community as well.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

**Clark to offer its first
bachelor's degree**



This has been a year of highlights for Clark's Dental Hygiene program, including the opening of the Firstenburg Family Dental Hygiene Education and Care Center and now the introduction of a Bachelor of Applied Science degree.

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) has approved Clark College's proposal to add the college's first baccalaureate degree. Starting in the fall of 2015 the college will offer a Bachelor of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene.

The B.A.S. in Dental Hygiene will benefit both students and the community, according to Dr. Tim Cook, Vice President of Instruction at Clark College. He explained that this program opens up additional job opportunities to students, while adding very few additional courses to their degree plan. "Previously, students in the Associate of Applied Science program in Dental Hygiene were here for four or more years because of the requirements of the program," Dr. Cook said. "Being able to offer this degree allows Clark students to earn

a bachelor's degree in the same time." The new program builds on the current dental hygiene program, with an increased emphasis on research and educational methodologies. Because all dental hygiene curriculum is standardized by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), minimal changes to the A.A. program are required.

The new B.A.S. in Dental Hygiene is Clark College's first baccalaureate degree. Students with an associate degree are typically employed in private practice offices or clinics. The bachelor's degree provides opportunities for dental hygienists to work in dental sales, public health, and research. "Like many other healthcare professions, dental hygiene has experienced a gradual yet steady movement toward the bachelor's degree as the desirable degree for entry-level professionals," Dr. Cook stated.

The approval of this program caps off a year of highlights for the program, including the opening of the Firstenburg Family Dental Hygiene Education and Care Center. The \$3.3 million renovation was funded by donations from a variety of entities including the Firstenburg Foundation, Roy and Virginia Andersen Endowment, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, John A. and Helen M. Cartales Foundation, and many others. Renovations of the space allow the program to serve more students and more patients – particularly children and underserved populations.

The addition of the B.A.S. in Dental Hygiene is part of a larger push to expand access to baccalaureate education in Washington State that began with the passage of HB1794 by the Washington Legislature in 2005. This bill, which included language allowing community and technical colleges to begin offering applied baccalaureate degree programs, was designed to meet the state's goal of increasing the number of baccalaureate degrees earned in Washington to 42,400 by 2019. As of the fall of 2013, there are 11 colleges in the State Board of Community and Technical College (SBCTC) system offering 23 different applied baccalaureate degrees.

Applied baccalaureate programs are seen as a perfect fit for community and technical colleges because they fill the gap some employers are finding in filling jobs that require both technical proficiency and the skills that a baccalaureate degree typically provides. These degrees also broaden the range of jobs and promotion opportunities available to students, both key goals for community and technical colleges.

Training Tomorrow's Workforce



Welding instructor Caleb White, *left*, shows students Grant Gwilliam and Cody Cook how to use a CNC plasma table, which is used in the computer-assisted cutting of metals. White has been active in developing new curriculum that teaches Clark students fabrication, a skill many local employers are

seeking.

This summer, Clark is taking the next step in boosting our region's economy by introducing a new technical program and adjusting some existing programs to better meet the needs of today's employers.

Highlights of these changes include:

- A new Industrial Maintenance Technician (IMT) program that combines a selection of Clark's existing Mechatronics, Machining, and Welding courses to train students on how to provide preventive maintenance and repair support to manufacturing and other mechanical industries. Leaders from regional industry have indicated a strong need for qualified IMTs, and labor surveys show that the average annual wage for IMTs is \$43,000.
- Clark's Welding program is introducing all-new curriculum that not only expands the variety of welding processes taught but teaches students how to use those processes in fabrication, a skill many local employers are seeking.
- Starting fall quarter 2014, Clark's Mechatronics and Machining programs will begin offering night classes to help accommodate the schedules of current industrial workers who need to expand their skill sets to meet the changing needs of modern industry.

Anyone interested in enrolling in these programs can visit www.clark.edu/gotech to learn more.

All these changes were made in direct consultation with local employers.



Damond Batties looks on while Nicole Doyle works in an argon purge chamber, which is used in welding air-sensitive materials like stainless steel and titanium that are common in modern industry.

“As the largest workforce training provider in Southwest Washington, Clark College continually meets the needs of the business community and ensures that students are equipped with high-demand, relevant skills, whether they are full-time students entering the workforce or incumbent workers developing new skills to improve the productivity of their employers,” said Michelle Giovannozzi, Director of Corporate & Community Partnerships for Clark College Corporate & Continuing Education. “Over the last year, we partnered with regional manufacturers to develop the new Industrial Maintenance Technician program and the revised Welding curriculum in order to support growth through the economic recovery and beyond.”

“The underlying driver for all of Clark College’s Career and Technical Education programs is to provide students with relevant and rigorous educational opportunities that give them the skills that meet the workforce demands for our local and regional industries,” said Genevieve Howard, who as Clark’s Dean of Workforce, Career & Technical Education oversees the

college's Mechatronics, Machining, and Welding programs, as well as such well-regarded programs as Computer-Aided Drafting & Design and Automotive Technology.

Clark College has long served as the premier resource for training skilled technicians who meet the needs of this region's industry. Through advisory committees and regular outreach, the college has developed partnerships that allow it to respond quickly to the needs of local employers. These new changes are part of that practice—a practice that has made the college Southwest Washington's best source for career and technical training.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Clark College to expand in the Gorge



Bingen, Wash., is the site of a new Clark College facility offering educational opportunity to the residents of the Columbia River Gorge.

Less than a year after establishing a location in the Columbia

River Gorge, Clark College is expanding its academic and technical offerings and moving into a new, larger facility.

The new location in Bingen, Wash., which is still being negotiated, would house both new classes designed for the needs of local employers as well as existing classes currently run out of Clark's facility at the Wind River Education Center in nearby Carson. That facility was opened in fall 2013 in response to widespread interest from Columbia Gorge residents and school districts in having access to affordable, college-level classes; it will close when the Bingen facility opens in order to house all Clark programs in one convenient location.

The expansion is made possible in part by a \$315,000 grant received by the college from the State of Washington to increase enrollment in aerospace education, approximately half of which is going to provide STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education at the Bingen facility. The grant is part of an \$8 million, statewide program to help two-year and technical colleges prepare future employees in the aerospace field.

The new Bingen location will include a computer lab and classroom space for classes in Computer Aided Design and Drafting (CADD), a skill that many regional employers cited as in high demand. The college will also be hiring a full-time employee in the Columbia River Gorge. The college is on an aggressive timeline, and will be ready to offer classes in the fall of 2014.

The college is also moving its Transitional Studies (basic education, GED preparation, and ESL) programs and other academic offerings previously provided at Wind River to the new Bingen facility. These other offerings include classes taken by area high school students through Washington State's Running Start program, which allows students to take college-level classes while still enrolled in high school for little or no tuition—potentially earning their associate degree while

still in high school.

Additionally, Clark College Corporate and Continuing Education (CCE) will use the new facility to continue and expand its specialized training for local employers. Beginning in fall 2014, CCE will also begin providing professional-development courses to the public, including LEAN, blueprint reading, Excel, Word, Outlook, Business Writing, email etiquette and communication, and essentials of supervision.

A full list of courses and activities in the Columbia River Gorge will be available on the Clark College website later this summer.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Changing Their Futures



Tyrene Weitz receives the Pat Fencil Scholarship during the 2014 GED/High School completion ceremony

Clark College celebrated its GED and High School Completion Ceremony on Saturday, June 21, capping off graduation week 2014 with a heartfelt ceremony featuring two student speakers and the conferring of certificates for GED or high school completion on more than 60 graduates.



Peter Smith

After a welcome from President Bob Knight and a greeting from

Board of Trustees Chair Royce Pollard, the microphone was handed over to two student speakers, Peter Smith and Tyrene Weitz. High school equivalency recipient Peter Smith started his comments by noting that the day had special meaning for him, as he was celebrating not only his degree, but also one year of sobriety.

Smith explained that a year ago, after finding himself in jail for a DUI, he decided the time had come to change his life. Earning his high school degree was the first step toward that; he plans to begin earning a certificate from Clark's welding program this summer as he continues his path toward a better life. "Hopefully, someday soon, someone like me will be standing here and my tax dollars will have helped him or her accomplish their goals," Smith said.

Smith thanked his girlfriend for her role in getting him to come to Clark, and noted that one of the things that many attending the ceremony had in common was support of family and loved ones. The O'Connell Sports Complex gymnasium was filled with balloons, flowers and the occasional noise-maker—proof of that support.

GED recipient Tyrene Weitz spoke next, saying that she had "given up" on school by the sixth grade and dropped out by the ninth grade. She added that while she had always wanted to get more education, she kept putting it off after beginning a family at a young age. A year ago, she too took the first step. "I know college is not easy, but nothing worth doing is, and to succeed you need to do the best you can, right where you are, with what you have," she said.

Weitz has not only completed her GED, but she has also completed English 101 and is on her way to achieving her goal of becoming a registered nurse.

Weitz got a surprise boost toward that goal after she left the stage, when Dean of Basic Education, English, Communications & Humanities Deena Godwin announced that Weitz was the recipient of this year's Pat Fencil scholarship.



Named after a longtime Adult Basic Education instructor, the scholarship provides \$1,500 toward tuition to an ABE student transitioning to college-level classes at Clark.

The day was capped by Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs Tim Cook presenting the class to President Knight, who conferred the degrees on the graduates. After each student crossed the stage to receive their degrees, President Knight sent them out in the sunny day with words of encouragement: "Your time at Clark has provided you with new skills, new perspectives, and new confidence. These are powerful tools. As you take your next step, use those tools to build a bright future for yourselves and for our community."

See more photos from the ceremony on our [Flickr page](#).

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Making the Most of her Opportunity



2014-2015 Presidential Scholarship recipient Natasha Hambrook

Early in Natasha Hambrook's high school career, things weren't looking so great. She felt frustrated by the lack of academic challenge in her classes; at the same time, she was having trouble accessing help in subjects where she was having difficulty, like math. She could have become discouraged. She could have checked out, or gotten into trouble, the way some bright but bored young students do.

Instead, she came to Clark.

Hambrook enrolled in Washington State's Running Start program, which allows students to take college classes while still enrolled in high school. That decision paid off on June 19, when Hambrook not only earned her associate degree at age 17, but was also named recipient of the 2014-2015 Community College President's Award. The annual scholarship is given to a Clark College graduate who is transferring to a WSU Vancouver degree program and who has demonstrated leadership potential, a commitment to community service, and academic

achievement. The scholarship award provides full-time tuition and is renewable for one additional year, essentially providing full tuition to complete a bachelor's degree.

Hambrook, who lives in Vancouver with her family and will turn 18 in July, has thrived at Clark, earning a 3.98 grade point average—yes, even in math, a subject she came to love. “Coming to Clark College has been the best experience,” she says. “I’ve met so many amazing instructors and classmates who really believed in me.”

Hambrook took classes in Clark’s challenging biology and chemistry sequences as preparation for her chosen career path of becoming a pediatric surgeon. She says one highlight of her time at Clark was getting to visit the college’s cadaver lab during a biology class.

“We got to reach inside the body,” recalls Hambrook. “I think a lot of people were surprised by how I reacted, because I’m kind of a ‘girly girl,’ and I think they thought I’d be turned off by that. But I loved it.”

Hambrook was able to get a different kind of hands-on experience at Clark with another one of her interests: volunteerism. In winter quarter 2014, she became the Student Volunteer Coordinator for Clark’s Service and Leadership in the Community (SLIC) program. In that role, she organized groups of students on volunteer trips to organizations like Habitat for Humanity and Clark County Food Bank, as well as a beach-cleaning trip to Cape Disappointment State Park.

On top of the 10 hours per week spent working for SLIC, Hambrook spent another six or more hours volunteering at the Southwest Washington Humane Society, where she helps care for cats and trains other teen volunteers.

Hambrook says her commitment to community service comes both from a love of helping others and from her own family’s experiences. “My family has received help from the food bank

in the past, so I know there's a need for community service," she says.



Natasha Hambrook receives her degree from President Knight at Clark's 2014 commencement ceremony.

Like 73 percent of Clark's student body, Natasha Hambrook is a first-generation college graduate. Her parents describe her as a very driven, self-motivated young woman. "She did it all on her own," says her father, Matt Hambrook, of Natasha's decision to enter Running Start and pursue a degree at Clark. "We just ferried her around."

"I am so proud of her accomplishments," added Natasha's mother, Denise Hollar-Hambrook, who has been working two jobs to help support the family, which also includes Natasha's younger brother, Matthew. "She will be a compassionate doctor—she will make a difference."

Clark College President Robert K. Knight announced Hambrook's scholarship during the college's 2014 commencement ceremony at Sleep Country Amphitheater. During the announcement, he said that a nominator had described Hambrook as "a rare type of goal-oriented student who combines exceptional natural ability with a willingness and eagerness to learn."

Hambrook plans to spend the summer continuing her volunteer work at the Humane Society, and possibly at the Free Clinic of Southwest Washington as well. She's already investigating on-campus volunteer opportunities at WSU Vancouver, where she will begin taking classes in the fall of 2014.

"It feels so amazing to have won this scholarship," Hambrook says. "I am so grateful I had the opportunity to participate in Running Start, because Clark helped shape me into the woman I am today."

Under the Caps



Jaime Taylor and Susan Baker

Susan Baker and Jaime Taylor had to arrive at the Sleep

Country Amphitheater before 6 p.m. to get their spots near the head of the line of graduates waiting for the Clark College commencement ceremony's 7 p.m. start. But for both women, the wait for this moment was much longer than an hour.

"I started this journey in 1995," said Baker, who works as a teacher in the college's Child & Family Studies department. "And then I had children, and I had to put things on hold for a while, but now here I am!"

Taylor—who, like Baker, was graduating with honors with an Associate of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE)—told a similar story. "It was kind of my time," she explained about her choice to enroll at Clark, where she worked in Baker's classroom as part of her studies. "My kids had gone to school and it was time for me to do something for myself."



Judith Gomez

All along the line, there were tales of dreams deferred.

Judith Gomez—also among the ECE contingent at the head of the line—first began taking classes in Clark’s non-credit English as a Second Language program 16 years ago, soon after she moved to Vancouver from her native Mexico. At the time, she spoke no English, but she was determined to go to college. She had to drop out twice when she had children, but eventually she was able to improve her English skills to the point that she could take for-credit classes.

“English isn’t my first language, so for me, doing papers was double the work,” she said, beaming under her blue mortarboard cap, from which dangled the golden tassel and insignia of Phi Theta Kappa, the honor society for two-year colleges. “But I was determined, and my teachers were amazing, so supportive.”

Gomez, who also works in Child & Family Studies as an early-intervention specialist, said she hoped her children—ages 19, 14, and 10—would follow in her footsteps to pursue college educations. “In ECE, we call it ‘modeling,’” she said. “You model the right behavior, and the children see it and learn. My children are so excited already. They’re all talking about going to college.”

Kevin Ross was also hoping to being role model. “I am the first one from my whole family to graduate from college,” he said as he waited to receive his Associate in Applied Technology in degree in Supervisory Management. “We’re talking parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins. It feels good—it feels *great*. It gives my family members something to see. ... I have a little brother. I want to set an example for him, to show him that you can succeed, no matter where you come from or what’s happened in your life.”



Juliab Dutkel, Carlos Cervantes, Gregory Michael, and Kevin Ross

For Ross, life has not always been peaceful. He first started thinking about attending Clark when he was incarcerated at Larch Corrections Center. He got to know Clark College President Bob Knight, who regularly visits the center to play basketball with inmates. "As I approached my time to come out [of Larch], Bob started asking me, 'What are you going to do next? You should come to Clark,'" Ross recalled. "So I went to Clark. It's offered me an alternate route toward success."

Ross said he plans to transfer to WSU Vancouver to pursue a bachelor's degree in business. He will not be the first former inmate to do so—in fact, Clark College has long run an educational program within Larch, and on the Friday following commencement, a ceremony within the correctional facility's walls would celebrate the 34 inmates who earned their High School Equivalencies during this academic year.

Standing next to Kevin Ross was Carlos Cervantes, whose cap sat atop a long mane of curly gray hair. Cervantes came to Clark when the housing-market crash put an end to his career as a Realtor. He was graduating with a degree in Paralegal, despite having suffered financial hardships after losing his job.

“I was really struggling, but I got scholarships,” Cervantes said. “The Clark College Foundation made my education possible.”



Katie Brilz and Lacey Mac-Rhyann

For other graduates, this commencement wasn't a dream deferred—rather, it was a dream accelerated. Lacey Mac-Rhyann had decorated her cap with the slogan “17 with my AST.” Mac-Rhyann was one of the 235 graduates who participated in Running Start, a Washington State program that allows students to take college classes while still enrolled in high school. “It was the most phenomenal thing,” she said of the program. “It didn't just give me college credit—it gave me college experience.”

Ana Lai, who had decorated her cap with pictures of scientific equipment and the logo of University of Washington, also appreciated being part of Running Start. “It gave me a head start,” said the Ft. Vancouver High student, who plans to become a mechanical engineer. “I did the calculus and physics sequences, and I loved it.”



Ana Lai

Alexander Thompson, who attended Evergreen High School, said he appreciated the serious atmosphere he experienced at Clark through Running Start. "In high school, you don't pay to get an education," he said. "In college, people are there because they want to learn."

Thompson was standing next to his friend Mark Hamilton, also a Running Start student from Evergreen, and who like Thompson plans on transferring to Portland State University's criminal justice program. Another thing the two young men had in common was that they originally chose Running Start in part because Clark's schedule offered them the flexibility to work full-time while attending school.

"You kind of cut out sleeping after a while," laughed Hamilton.



Timothy Witcher, Alecsander Thompson, Mark Hamilton, and English instructor Kate Scrivener.

As the bagpipes began to sound, the graduates quickly adjusted caps and gowns in preparation for their procession. This was the moment that would make all of it—the sleeplessness, the studying, the doubts and fears—worthwhile. Near the front of the line, Susan Baker got ready to complete the journey she’d begun almost 20 years earlier.

“You know, when you’re a mom, you spend so much time telling your kids that you’re proud of them,” she said. “It’s pretty cool to be hearing my kids tell me they’re proud of me.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley. More photos of graduates are available in the college’s Flickr album.

Congratulations, Class of 2014!



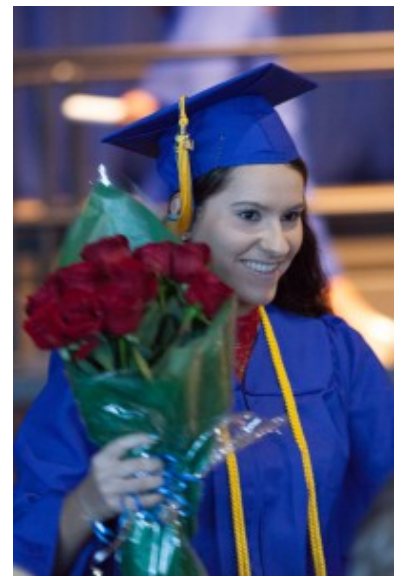
Student speaker Michelle Brincefield addresses her fellow graduates during the 2014 commencement ceremony.

Clark College honored its 78th graduating class—the largest in the college’s 80-year history—at the 2014 Clark College Commencement ceremony held Thursday evening, June 19, at the Sleep Country Amphitheater.

Approximately 2,100 degrees and certificates were conferred on the next generation of our community’s workers, leaders, and scholars—up from 1,900 the year before. Approximately 715 graduates participated in the commencement ceremony, including 235 Running Start graduates—again, a new record for the college, which has the largest Running Start program in the state.

“Tonight we are here to celebrate your individual accomplishment, and more than that, we are here to celebrate a community of accomplishment,” said Clark College President Robert K. Knight in his opening remarks to the Class of 2014. “Our community needs each and every one of you with your individual skills and talents.”

Clark College Board of Trustees Chair Royce Pollard echoed that thought in his own remarks, saying “We know our future is in good hands with you, just as our community has been in good hands with Clark College alumni for eight decades now.” The former Vancouver mayor then asked the graduates to raise their right hands and repeat the following pledge: “I will never forget that I am a member of the Penguin Nation.”



Presidential
Scholarship
recipient Natasha
Hambrook takes her
seat after
receiving her
diploma.

For the second year in a row, the ceremony’s student speaker was chosen through an essay contest open to all 2014

graduates. Outgoing ASCC president Dena Brill introduced Michelle Brincefield, who entered Clark through Running Start and is planning on attending New Mexico Highlands University on a full athletic scholarship.

“Wherever life takes you after today, you can always take pride in knowing that you have a college degree,” Brincefield said. “No one can take that accomplishment away from you.”

During the ceremony, Clark College President Robert K. Knight announced the names of the recipients of the 2014 Exceptional Faculty Awards. The 2014 awardees are Kelly Fielding, instructor of psychology; Chris Martin, instructor of computer technology and computer graphics technology; Sarah Theberge, professor of early childhood education; and Jim Wilkins-Luton, professor of English.

Knight also announced the recipient of the 2014-2015 Community College President’s Award, which is given to a Clark College graduate who is transferring to a WSU Vancouver degree program and who demonstrated leadership potential, a commitment to community service, and academic achievement. Natasha Hambrook will receive full-time tuition that is renewable for one additional year.

This year’s commencement speaker was *ABC Evening News* anchor Byron Pitts, who delivered an inspiring speech about the importance of helping others. Pitts began by explaining his own difficult beginnings with education: Until age 12, he was functionally illiterate, and it took the unflagging support of his single mother to help push him toward academic success.



2014 commencement
keynote speaker
Byron Pitts

Pitts said that while some of that night's graduating class may have had an easy time earning their degrees, he suspected many had had rough roads to travel. "I imagine there are some graduates here tonight who heard too often, 'Not you, now now, not yet. You're not good enough. You're not ready,'" he said, adding that he called such graduates "Children of the Storm."

"To you, the Children of the Storm—to you for whom this night was not guaranteed—you especially have a responsibility, I think, to allow somebody else to live their dream," he said. "Whether it's in nursing or as a machinist or going on to continue your education—whatever it is, in that space where you stand, make life better for someone else."

Pitts received a standing ovation, and it was clear that many attendees found his message inspiring, as posts on social media soon showed.

Photos and Video: Clark College/Jenny Shadley.

Watch the entire ceremony on CVTV.

A Supreme Opportunity



Washington State Supreme Court Justice Susan Owens, *standing*, answers questions from students in Clark's Business Law class, which she visited with Chief Justice Barbara Madsen and Associate Chief Justice Charles Johnson.

In 2012, the Clark College Law Club took a field trip to Olympia, where they visited both the State Legislature and the State Supreme Court. While there, paralegal student Richard Thomas got the chance to chat with then-Justice James Johnson, who retired from the court last month.

“Justice Johnson and I were talking, and I asked him, ‘Does the court ever go out and visit places around the state?’” recalled Thomas. “And he said, ‘Yes! We love going on the road. The problem is, we have to be invited.’ So I came back here the next day and started trying to get this going.”



Clark Law Club member Richard Thomas helped make the Washington Supreme Court’s visit a reality.

Two years later, Thomas’s efforts—along with those of the rest of the Law Club and the college itself—resulted in the Washington State Supreme Court spending two days at Clark College. The nine justices visited classrooms, met with members of the community, and heard three cases during their time at the college. Justice Mary Yu, who had been appointed by Gov. Jay Inslee but not yet sworn in at the time of the visit, also attended many of the events, including an open forum.

Many students from Clark’s highly regarded Paralegal program attended the open forum, gaining career advice from the member of the highest court in the state. The justices were emphatic about the importance of paralegals in their work.

“A paralegal really is part of the team,” said Justice Mary Fairhurst, who spent 16 years working in the Washington Attorney General’s Office before becoming a judge. “We

couldn't do our job without them.”

“A good paralegal is a little bit like a fortune teller,” added Justice Yu. “Somebody who knows which deadlines are coming and makes sure everything's taken care of to meet them. That is so helpful to the lawyers.”

The court heard three cases in Gaiser Student Center on the second day of their visit: one on whether or not drug court staffing should be presumptively open to the public; the disciplinary case of a lawyer; and a case questioning whether or not past acts of domestic violence were admissible evidence in assessing the credibility of an alleged victim. Joining the court to hear these cases was Justice Pro Tem Joel Penoyar, who was temporarily filling Justice James Johnson's seat until Justice Yu was sworn in.



Clark paralegal student Becky Pomaville listens as Washington State Supreme Court justices answer her question about appellate law.

The justices took questions from the courtroom audience after two of the hearings. “There are hardly any lawyers in this area who practice appellate law,” said Clark paralegal student Becky Pomaville. “What is it that makes it so difficult?”

“That's true, though of course there are some,” replied

Justice Debra Stephens, who practiced appellate law for many years. “The beauty of being an appellate lawyer is that you don’t often have to go to court very often. You can do it from your deck chair, so to speak. ... What makes an excellent appellate lawyer is a study of where the court is headed. If you’re interested in that, I hope you do pursue it.”

Afterward, Pomaville said she was heartened by Justice Stephens’ words. She hopes to continue on to law school after graduating from Clark, hopefully in spring 2015, and to specialize in appellate law. Surprisingly, just six months previously, Pomaville hadn’t even considered going to college. “When I graduated from high school, I got a bunch of scholarships, but I didn’t complete college,” she said. “I joke that I got my ‘MRS’ degree instead.”

But when the recently single mother of eight stopped by Clark’s Career Center for some job-hunting help, she noticed a poster for the college’s Eligibility Programs that mentioned tuition assistance for displaced homemakers.

“I hadn’t even thought of the possibility of coming here,” she said, but stopped by Eligibility Programs and quickly found herself enrolled for winter quarter. Now she is thriving in the Paralegal program. “I am learning a lot. Last term I took a criminal law course and it was really tough—and I enjoyed every minute of it.”



The justices heard three

real cases during their visit to Clark.

For paralegal student Richard Thomas, whose offhand question during a field trip resulted in this visit, the event was a fitting way to end his time at Clark; he anticipates graduating this quarter and is hopeful that his current internship may turn into a full-time job. Looking every inch the professional in his suit and tie, he said he valued the opportunity to not only witness the justices hearing cases, but also to spend time socializing with them during private receptions organized by the college during the visit.

“When you have a chance to rub elbows with those who are at the pinnacle of your profession, I think it’s incumbent on you to absorb their experience and their wisdom,” he said. “But then at the same time, once you get to talk with them one-on-one, you realize they’re real people, too.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley. For more photos from this event, visit our Flickr album.

**Honoring Those Who Fell,
Supporting Those Who Served**



Members of the 142nd Wing of the Portland Air National Guard formed the color guard that opened the Veterans Resource Center ribbon-cutting event on May 22.

On May 22, the Thursday before Memorial Day, Clark College hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its recently opened Veterans Resource Center (VRC). The event began with a color guard and the singing of the National Anthem by student Petya Grozeva. VRC Coordinator Kurt Kolch introduced the event by reminding guests that unlike Veterans Day, which honors those among us who have served in the military, Memorial Day is a day to remember those men and women who died while serving.

Physics professor Dick Shamrell, a 25-year Air Force veteran, spoke about how veterans resource centers like Clark's helped him and his wife to succeed at second careers outside of the military. He also described how his military experience enriches his teaching—when asked by a student what the speed of sound was, for example, he can accurately describe what it is like to go *twice* that speed.



A ceremonial ribbon to the VRC's doorway was cut by Clark College President Bob Knight, student veteran Alex Peraza, VRC donor Jane Hagelstein and Jennifer Rhoads, president of the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington, which

contributed \$30,000 toward the VRC in November. The Vancouver Barracks Historical Society provided military uniforms and maps relevant to the region for guests to view.

Peraza, a veteran of the U.S. Army who served as an infantryman in Iraq, is in his second year at Clark pursuing a Associate of Applied Technology degree in electrical engineering; after graduating from Clark, he plans to pursue his bachelor's degree at Washington State University Vancouver. A single father of three children, he said he is motivated to continue his studies "not only by my children's needs, but by my nation's needs," citing President Obama's 2011 State of the Union address that connected the country's success to an increase in graduates from fields related to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

"The people at the Veteran Resource Center at Clark College are the reason why I have been so successful in the past and moving forward," Peraza added. "From [Veterans Affairs Program Specialist] Mike Gibson to [VetCorps Navigator] Tim McPharlin, as well as supporting staff, all have helped me navigate the hurdles and obstacles of being a student veteran."

Approximately 700 veterans enroll at Clark College every quarter, about 500 of whom use GI Bill benefits to help pay for tuition, fees, housing, books and supplies.

More photos from the event at our [Flickr page](#).

Video: Clark College/Nick Bremer Korb
Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley