



Alumni News

News about Western Nebraska Community College, Foundation, alumni, and friends



Congratulations to 2010 Graduates!

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We are proud to recognize the May 2010 graduates of Western Nebraska Community College. The college's 78th annual commencement ceremony was held on Saturday, May 15, in Cougar Palace, and WNCC President Eileen E. Ely presented 261 graduates their degrees.

Dr. Rod A. Risley, Executive Director of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, delivered the keynote address to the Class of 2010.

Remarks were also given by Dr. Ely and Jane Wisniewski, Western Community College Area Board of Governors Chair. The program included

music from the Western Nebraska Winds, under the direction of Dr. Nathaniel Johnson, WNCC Instrumental Music Instructor, and the Collegiate Chorale, conducted by Rita Stinner, WNCC's Vocal Music Director.

This past year, nearly 100 students from our district completed their GED requirements and became eligible for graduation. On Friday, May 14, Marilyn Dodge, Educational Outreach Programs Director, presented certificates to twenty-six graduates at the annual GED graduation ceremony.

Dr. Eileen E. Ely was the featured speaker.



Visit our website — www.wncc.edu/foundation:

- Honor Roll of Donors 2008-09
- Endowed and General Scholarships
- Alumni Information Update Form
- Ways to Give to the Foundation

Name the Newsletter Contest

Our Newsletter Needs a Name!

“Alumni News” is okay, but we think the name could be better. How would you like to go down in history as the person who named the WNCC Foundation's newsletter.

To submit a name, send an e-mail to foundation@wncc.edu with “Newsletter Name Contest” as the subject, and your brilliant idea for a newsletter name in the body of the e-mail.

Submit as many entries as you like by July 17. Please include

your full name and contact information.

Come up with a name that would encompass all three campuses, and if we decide to use it, you'll win a fabulous prize — your name in print plus a useful and colorful WNCC shopping bag.

2009-2010 Distinguished Alumnus — Mike Downey



Mike Downey with wife, Lisa, and WNCC President Eileen E. Ely. Lisa is also a former student and was an adjunct professor at WNCC.

Michael W. Downey was awarded the Western Community College Area Distinguished Community College Alumni award for 2009.

Downey attended Western Nebraska Community College on a tennis scholarship from 1978-1980 and earned an Associate of Science Degree (with honors) in 1980. He continued his education at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas, where he completed his

Bachelor's Degree in Business Finance (Magna Cum Laude) in 1982. In addition, Mike completed a graduate degree from Southwestern Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University in 1991.

Mike and his family moved back to Scottsbluff in December 1990 to work for First State Bank as branch manager. He is currently President and a member of First State Bank's Board of Directors.

Downey believes community colleges play a vital role in preparing individuals for professional and vocational growth.

"It is a great stepping stone for so many people who may not be able or ready to make the move to a four-year college. I know it gave me a great start on my college career. Small class sizes and excellent access to my professors gave me the best possible chance for academic success."

Foundation 2009-2010 Annual Campaign A Success

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

~William Butler Yeats~

At the time of print, the WNCC Foundation 2009-2010 Annual Campaign has raised over \$109,000, surpassing the goal of \$75,000 set by the WNCC Foundation Board in July 2009. It has been over a decade since the WNCC Foundation conducted an annual campaign, and businesses and individuals from

throughout the Western Nebraska Community College service area have stepped up to generously support the WNCC Foundation.

The Annual Fund is used at the Board's discretion for essential items, such as Foundation operations, student needs, programming and facility

necessities, and funding for faculty development.

Every gift makes a difference.

If you would like to support Western Nebraska Community College, please contact Foundation Executive Director Dayle Wallien at waliend@wncc.edu or call at 308.630.6551.

Scottsbluff Campus Begins Renovations to South Entrance



Construction began this spring on a \$775,000 project to renovate the entrance to the main building at the Scottsbluff Campus. When completed, the project will align with an existing street, a plaza in front of the south doors will be constructed to address safety issues with water flow, and

students and staff will be provided enhanced accessibility to the campus in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.

Completed first, the driveway was moved back from the entrance and parking added to the southeast. The new design

also adds more functionality by adding sidewalks and parking for residents of Pioneer Hall. Existing trees donated by past graduation classes will be retained as a part of the new construction.

The project is expected to be completed by the beginning of fall classes on August 18.

Professor Emeritus — Margaret E. Weekes

Margaret E. Weekes received Professor Emeritus honorary status at Western Nebraska Community College. Margaret has had a distinguished career of thirty-one years of service as a Practical Nursing Instructor, beginning in September 1978 at the Alliance School of Practical Nursing, which later merged with Nebraska Western College.

She earned her Associate of Applied Science in Nursing degree from Queens College in Flushing, New York, in 1969,

and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Nebraska in 1987. Additionally, she has continued studies at Chadron State College, Western Nebraska Community College, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and through graduate work at Clarkson College.

In his nomination of Ms. Weekes for this award, Garry Alkire noted that “one of the greatest tributes to Ms. Weekes’ accomplishments as

an instructor and program leader comes from a proud and productive legacy of passionate excellence, supported by affirmations from colleges and former students who speak often of her dedication, clarity, work ethic, compassion, and commitment to patient care and safety. Margaret has a reputation for being meticulous and for setting high expectations for students, but she was also willing to help them achieve.”



Margaret E. Weekes receives Honorary Status of WNCC Professor Emeritus at May 2010 commencement ceremony.

In Memoriam: Fredrick W. Ruff

Fredrick W. “Fred” Ruff passed away on June 7, 2010. He has left with us a legacy of his commitment to education.

Fred was a member of the Foundation Board of Directors for more than two decades and served as Secretary since June 1993.

Fred graduated from Scottsbluff High School in 1947. He was a graduate of Scottsbluff Junior College in 1950 with an Associate of Arts Degree in Business Administration. He continued his education at the Banking School-University in Madison, Wisconsin.

All of us at the Foundation are so fortunate to have known him and appreciate his dedicated service. WNCC benefited greatly through his commitment of time and leadership to the Foundation.



*Board Member 1989-2010
Class of '50*

Vooge Recognized as Faculty Employee of the Year

Robert Vooge was presented the 2010 Faculty Employee-of-the-Year award and was recognized for his 40 years of service at Western Nebraska Community College’s annual employee recognition event.

Bob began at the College in September of 1970 and is a

Business Instructor. He received both his Bachelor and Master Degrees from the University of North Dakota.

In making the award, WNCC President Eileen Ely noted that “his dedication to student learning, his patience, and his consistent expectations of

performance by his students across the years is legendary.” She thanked Vooge for his personal and professional contributions to the College, stating that “he represents the best of our proud tradition of instructional excellence and commitment to our college.”



Alumni Update



Rawnda Callahan of the Nebraska Western College women's basketball team—March 1985.

Rawnda (Callahan) Pierce-Kuckkahn, ('86) was recruited from Brighton, Colorado, for the Nebraska Western College Lady Cougars basketball team under head coach Harvey Schmidt. She was chosen as team captain her second year. She received both an athletic scholarship and academic scholarship to attend NWC.

After completing her A.A.S. in Business Technologies (with honors), she continued at the University of Wyoming, receiving her B.S. in 1989. She holds

a Certified Public Accountants license from the State of Nebraska.

Rawnda is currently the Executive Director of Twin Cities Development Association, Inc., which provides economic development services to area communities in the Panhandle of Nebraska. After employment in public accounting and with local governmental entities for several years, she “looked at the job with Twin Cities Development as a challenge and a change of pace. I like having an impact on the community and



helping shape it for the future.”

Rawnda is married to Scottsbluff City Manager Rick Kuckkahn. She has two sons, Michael (20) and Brannon (17), and stepson Matt Kuckkahn and family.

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We would love to hear from you. Please send news you would like to share, along with information about when you attended WNCC to foundation@wncc.edu.



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THE FOUNDATION
Western Nebraska Community College



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