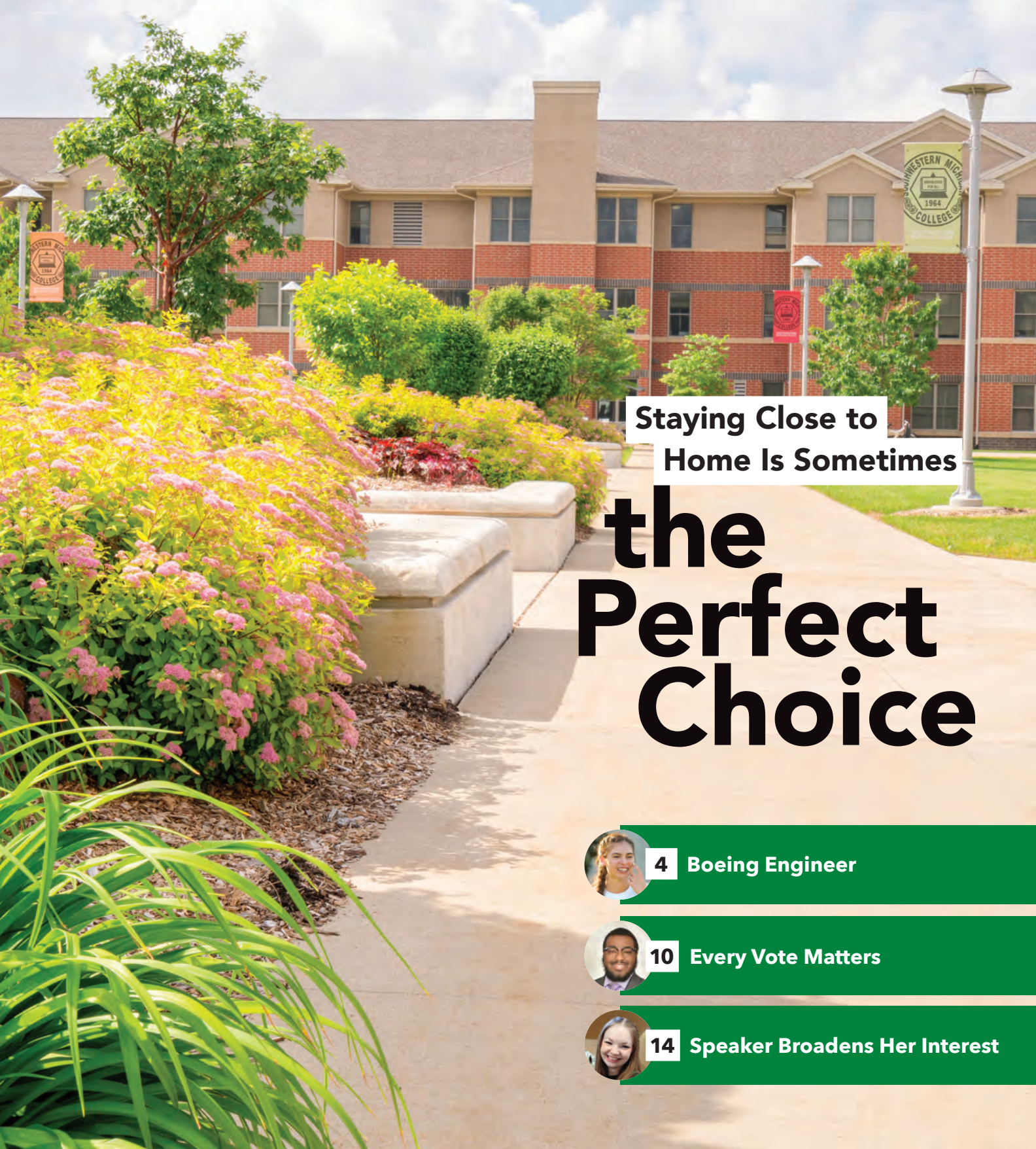


# THE SOUTHWESTER

SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE | SPRING 2024

MAGAZINE



Staying Close to  
Home Is Sometimes

# the Perfect Choice



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# THE SOUTHWESTER

MAGAZINE



## Welcome to the Southwester!

The Southwester—written as Sou'Wester early on—was Southwestern Michigan College's newspaper for more than half a century. The paper was developed and distributed by SMC journalism students. In 1994, the paper won first-place national recognition from the Associated Collegiate Press at the University of Minnesota and from the American Scholastic Press Association in New York under 1989-1999 journalism adviser Dr. Chris Robinson. In 1999, color was incorporated into the paper and, in 2013, the paper was transferred into an electronic format. Today, the news stories are distributed on the college's website and shared on social media. To keep the tradition alive, The Southwester was transformed into this bi-annual magazine for the community, alumni, and donors to enjoy.

In this issue of The Southwester, you'll be introduced to SMC alumni who have made a success in their careers by building on their degrees from SMC. You'll also learn about some of the exciting things happening at the college.

To learn more about the college and programs featured in this publication, visit [swmich.edu](http://swmich.edu).

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## Greetings from Dr. Joe

### Dear Alumni and Friends of Southwestern Michigan College,

What an exciting season for Southwestern Michigan College. This spring, we celebrated five straight semesters of enrollment growth and our best fall-to-spring retention since we began keeping records. We learned in January that for the academic year 2022-23 we led all 28 Michigan community colleges in growth percentage for Fiscal Year Equated Students (FYES).

Many ask me what is driving our recent success at SMC. Rather than pointing to one thing or another, let me suggest that it is, as I recently read in an issue of *The Harvard Business Review*, the combination of our institutional assets and capabilities. Previous administrations and the Board of Trustees wisely invested in student housing and academic facilities, thus giving the college curb appeal uncommon among our peers. In recent years, we have built upon those investments with the addition of systems, both technological and human, to help us better attract, enroll, and retain students.

Our faculty and staff have uncommon capabilities, enabling them to teach and advise students toward the ultimate goal of graduation. Our staff look forward to orienting new students, and SMC students are known by their names and not just their identification numbers. Our faculty work one-on-one with students on honors projects and lead student groups on research trips. Many of our coaches are full-time employees, which means they provide daily support and direction for our student-athletes.

Most important, our students are succeeding in the classrooms and laboratories and, thereby, graduating at a record rate. They are providing inspiring performing arts programs for our community, and they are competing for intercollegiate athletics championships. There has never been a better time to study at Southwestern Michigan College.

We Run as One,  
Dr. Joe

Boeing  
Engineer



# SHOOTS for the STARS with Satellites



Jenny Hinton came to Southwestern Michigan College from Monticello, Illinois, and immediately immersed herself into life as a Roadrunner. A softball and volleyball standout, she learned rock climbing while at SMC. But it was her math and science ability that propelled her into SMC's Honors Program and an officer's position in the Sigma Psi Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges.

Hinton graduated in December 2018, a semester early, with a straight-A average. In January 2019, she transferred to Utah State University for her baccalaureate degree in electrical engineering.

Today, she lives in California and works for the Electronic Products division of Boeing Defense, Space and Security.

"As far as I know, El Segundo is the main location for space systems. My



team does a lot of new design, but we also help out other Boeing teams with electrical design and analysis," Hinton said.

### 'We work mainly on satellites destined for space'

"Since we work mainly on satellites that are destined for space's harsh environment where they cannot easily be repaired, one of our main roles is to perform worst-case circuit analysis. This requires checking that each part of a circuit will meet all program requirements under the worst conditions.

"I wouldn't say aerospace was my goal," Hinton said, "but it really worked out for me to get into it. Going into SMC, I was clueless about what I wanted to do for a career.

"I still really credit Dr. Katie Hannah (Vice President for the Student Experience) and Dr. Keith Howell (Dean of Arts and Sciences) for encouraging me to get into electrical engineering," Hinton said. "Katie helped me see that engineering was a real possibility. Deciding to be an engineer was incredibly overwhelming, especially because of how many different engineering fields there are."

Hannah had just been promoted to her new position when *The Southwester* spoke to Hinton.

"That's awesome, but I can't say I'm surprised at all. Katie is the perfect person for a position like that. She is so thoughtful and imaginative. She really knew how to make me feel seen and important during my time there," said Hinton, a former SMC Welcome Week leader.

"Dr. Howell's passion and ability to clearly explain complicated math subjects, like differential equations, made me enjoy his classes and helped me explore which engineering fields use math the most, which is how I found electrical engineering. After getting further into my program at Utah State, I found that thinking through circuits came naturally, so I never thought of doing anything else.

"My student jobs there really solidified that I enjoy the field," she said. "The Space Dynamics Laboratory was where most engineering students wanted to work because it is a relatively large engineering company."

### Taking a risk out West

"My boss at the time told me he thought I was an interesting applicant because I came from the Midwest and he

liked that I was taking a risk out West. I really liked that job. It felt like important work, but doing mission operations required a lot more coding than I prefer. I ended up taking a power electronics course with Dr. Regan Zane, who happens to be the director of the Center for Advancing Sustainability through Powered Infrastructure for Roadway Electrification, which includes the USU Power Electronics Lab.

"Like Dr. Howell, he was passionate about the subject, which made the class really enjoyable. He offered me a job and, after a summer of mission operations, I decided I should explore power electronics. This is when I fell in love with power electronics! I would have stayed at that job forever, but I had to graduate. I really love my job now because my team works with power electronics for space systems, so it's the perfect combination."

Hinton said the main reason she chose Utah State "was because of their scholarships paired with knowing they had a solid electrical engineering program. I was able to graduate debt-free, which was always a huge motivator for me!

"I actually had no idea just how beautiful Utah was before moving. I didn't have any goals of going West, but I knew I was ready to leave the Midwest, and things really fell into place again to come out to California.

"My boyfriend since high school was getting his master's degree at the University of Southern California, so I guess you could say I followed him. It was a huge adjustment, and I actually hated it in California for the first year."

### 'I started to love living here'

"After making friends, getting into beach volleyball, and starting my job at Boeing, I started to love living out here. It's wildly different from the Midwest. There are endless things to do, and I live in a safe beach city with very consistent weather.

"However, everything is considerably more expensive, and trying to drive out of the area is very difficult. I have really enjoyed being here for the time being,

but I don't see this being my forever home—mainly because it would take years to be able to afford a home here!"

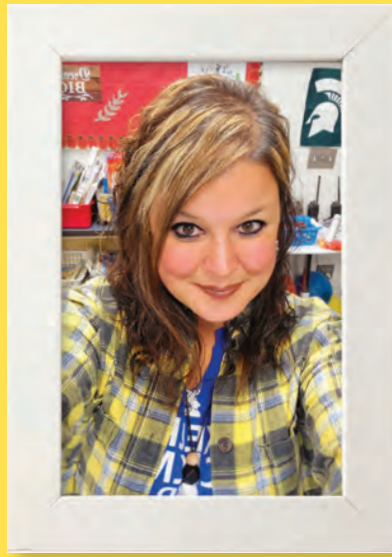
Hinton's favorite SMC memories revolve around her friends.

"Meeting people and making connections in the Midwest definitely always felt a lot more natural and genuine," she said. "The intramural sports were very fun—the best memory being my three-person team winning volleyball one season! I'm so glad SMC is back in intercollegiate sports! I'm only a little jealous it happened after I left! Having the rock wall there was so great. I was lucky my roommate loved it as much as me so we could go every day. Sadly, I have not climbed much since leaving Utah, but I do miss it and hope to do it more again one day."



Hinton shared how happy she is with her choice to start at SMC. "I really needed the space away from my hometown to find who I am on my own. SMC made that a reality by being an affordable, great education" she said.

"Reflecting on the past few years, if there is one thing I've learned it's being able to adapt to the situation you're given and not being afraid to accept new opportunities. It is very scary moving somewhere new and branching out, but after doing it a few times and looking back now, I realize how grateful I am that I took those chances."





## Staying Close to Home Is Sometimes

# the Perfect Choice



**A**t 45, Jayna (Peterson) Sobecki has been teaching Cassopolis children half her life. She's now in her 23rd year at Sam Adams Elementary School, and it's been 25 years since she was selected to speak at Southwestern Michigan College's 1998 commencement.

Sobecki had been a Brandywine High School valedictorian, so the full-ride scholarship she received made it any easy decision to follow her parents to SMC, just as two of her three younger brothers followed her.

Although her dad Gail ('72) and mom Mary Lou (Springsteen, '74) graduated from SMC, they actually met at the Cass County Fair, where he has since served as president of the board, vice president, director, and beef superintendent.

The Peterson clan have been mainstays of the Cass County agricultural community and of the fair association for generations. Her grandparents, the M. Kenneth Petersons, have been grand marshals of the fair, and Sobecki and her brothers graduated from showing sheep and steers to serving on fair committees. The family's cattle farm provides a bucolic view across M-60 from SMC's Niles campus where Sobecki took night classes.

While her brothers both transferred to MSU from SMC, Sobecki chose another path.

"I kind of ruined the streak because I went to Western" for teacher education, she said. "I decided I wanted to be a teacher when I was 3. I loved school. I'd line up my stuffed animals and dolls, I'd be the teacher, and I'd make my brothers be my students and give them homework."

Sobecki graduated from WMU in December 2000 after student teaching in Three Rivers "because it was the closest partner with Western that I could drive from home to save money on housing.

"I remember feeling honored to be the speaker and excited to be graduating," Sobecki recalled. "I was vice president of (Sigma Psi Chapter of) Phi Theta Kappa," the international community college honor society.

Coming out of college mid-school year, she spent a semester subbing for Niles. Then her phone rang. It was Cassopolis calling in the form of Tracy Hertsel, now an SMC trustee. He needed a kindergarten teacher, so Sobecki reported for an interview and was hired.

"Lower elementary is definitely my favorite," Sobecki said. "Kindergarten is exactly what I wanted to teach. I've also taught first and second.

"I love seeing them learn new things," she said. "They get so excited when they can say all of their letters or know all of their sounds, sound out a word or read their first book. They're so proud of themselves

that they can do it. It's amazing to think (former students) are in college, out of college, or have kids of their own. I have not had any children of my students. But I know some of my students have children, so one of these years. That will really make me feel old.

"Now I'm a special education teacher," she said. "I'm working on getting my master's degree in special education from Eastern Michigan University."

### Becoming a special education teacher

Throughout her years teaching kindergarten and first grade, Sobecki always had children in her classroom with special needs.

"I always enjoyed working with them and trying to adapt things to help them, so two years ago, when our principal said we needed another special education teacher and said anyone who wanted to go back to school could teach while taking classes, I thought, 'Maybe that's me. Maybe it's time to switch over.'

"It's been a really good change. It's something different, yet I'm still working with the same grade levels. I never thought about doing it before I had that opportunity. I like being able to help teachers who need help with certain kids to help them learn in different ways so they can be successful," drawing on her experience with more than 500 children.

When Sobecki returns to the SMC campus now, it's usually to hike on the peaceful Roadrunner trails. "I've also had Cassopolis professional-development training there in the library," she shared.

"I have good memories of SMC," she said. "I enjoyed my time there. I knew my parents went there, so I didn't consider anywhere else. I knew it would be cheaper for me to start out there.

"And, at that time, I didn't want to go very far from home. I liked being close to my family, so it made sense. With small class sizes, it was like high school because some of my friends went there, too. Then, as valedictorian, I got a full-ride scholarship, so I only had to pay for books."



1980 SMC Nursing Graduate

LEFT  
**Cardiology**  
FOR  
**Anesthesiology**

**R**ick VanTuyl grew up in Dowagiac, watching Original Road and Trail Race (now Steve's Run) runners stream past his house at the foot of Wilbur Hill Road.

VanTuyl, 64 in March, graduated from Union High School in 1977 and earned his Southwestern Michigan College associate degree in nursing in 1980, the only man of five who made it to the finish line that year.

Flash forward four decades and VanTuyl is at the pinnacle of his profession as a nurse anesthetist for Henry Ford Health. Henry Ford, established in 1915, is headquartered in Detroit and has more than 30,000 employees and six hospitals.

VanTuyl lives six miles from Henry Ford Wyandotte Hospital in Brownstown Charter Township, Wayne County. The former cardiac nurse has been in the Detroit area for 40 years.

His wife Laura, a respiratory therapist, is his "eating adventures companion." Others might call them gourmands for the pleasure they take in fine dining. His social media posts about meals only tell part of his story.

**From Schato to CRNA**

VanTuyl took three years to graduate from SMC because he started in pre-law and learned he hated accounting. His entry into nursing involved a name familiar to older local residents. Schato





Nursing Home was located where the The Timbers of Cass County is today on Colby Street.

"I didn't make the basketball team my junior year," he recalled, "so I got a job in the kitchen at Schato (pronounced chateau). I loved working with those people. Once I turned 17, I became an orderly. Bottom line, I was really good at it. It was '78, and I'd completed a year at SMC, but I had no thoughts of anesthesia at that point, even though nurse anesthetists have been around longer than anesthesiologists.

"Nurse anesthetist is now a Ph.D. program. I don't have a (doctorate), I have a master's" in nurse anesthesia in 1995 from University of Detroit Mercy, as well as a 1991 bachelor's degree in nursing from Oakland University.

According to VanTuyl, he pursued a bachelor's degree so he could go to anesthesia school. "I worked and trained at Henry Ford downtown, where they also had a residency program. We did all the same stuff the residents did. In terms of anesthesia knowledge, we have to be able to practice independently—in smaller areas especially. My nursing background is still very important in the performance of my job. My cardiology background is a big advantage. I thought I was going to love doing heart surgeries, but bypasses are formulaic. I did a lot of heart transplants when I was at Henry Ford, as well as lungs, livers, and kidneys.

"I loved being a cardiac intensive care nurse. I worked the midnight shift. But I decided to go to anesthesia school to be able to put my kids through school and to afford Red Wings season tickets. It wasn't a noble cause," he chuckled. "By the time I was done, we had Tigers and Lions season tickets, too. It was a great bonding experience with my daughters going to all the games."

CRNAs are specialized nurses trained in pain relief and anesthesia delivery. They determine patient care plans independently or alongside other medical professionals. As advanced practice

registered nurses (APRNs), CRNAs have the highest level of nursing education.

Becoming a CRNA takes seven to 10 years, including clinical experience working as an RN in an ICU or a critical care department. Beginning in 2022, aspiring CRNAs could plan on spending two to three years to complete the required DNP or DNAP degree after earning their BSN and RN license.

When VanTuyl finished nursing school in 1980, "I was playing in a band with Mike Konopinski, Steve Gajewski, and Todd Wilson. We all moved to Kalamazoo. Mike and Steve were going to Western. I worked my first nursing job at Bronson Hospital. My first wife, whom I married in '83, was a nursing student there. That's where we met. She was from Allen Park" in Wayne County. "That's how I got here."

Laura "was first to work at Henry Ford," he said. "I worked at Wyandotte from 1985-87 in the intensive care unit and went to Henry Ford to the cardiac ICU for eight years, then to anesthesia school. Most people go now because it's so lucrative. It will be 30 years next year that I've been a nurse anesthetist. We make more than a lot of doctors—especially the poor guys who have to pay their own malpractice insurance. But you've got to remember, we're doing surgeries, and that's where money comes into hospitals.

"Where I'm at, an anesthesiologist covers four operating rooms. They see the patient pre-op, do the body systems checklist, and assess their airways. We look at what they've assessed and come up with a plan on how we're going to take care of the patient. I'll visit the patient, explain who I am, ask them if they have any questions.

"They won't remember anything from that pre-op room until they wake up in recovery. The circulating nurse and I take them back to their room. At our place, we do the introduction of the anesthesia together with the anesthesiologist.



I call the anesthesiologist when they're all hooked up to the anesthesia machine, blood pressure, heart rate, EKG, all that. We push the drugs, they go to sleep, I'll put a breathing tube into their windpipe and any other tubes we need to put in, and the surgeons and residents come in. When they wake up, I take the breathing tube out and take them to recovery. We do sedation, epidurals for labor and delivery, anesthesia for MRIs or cardiac catheters. In the cath lab they also put in pacemakers, implantable defibrillators for people with arrhythmia problems.

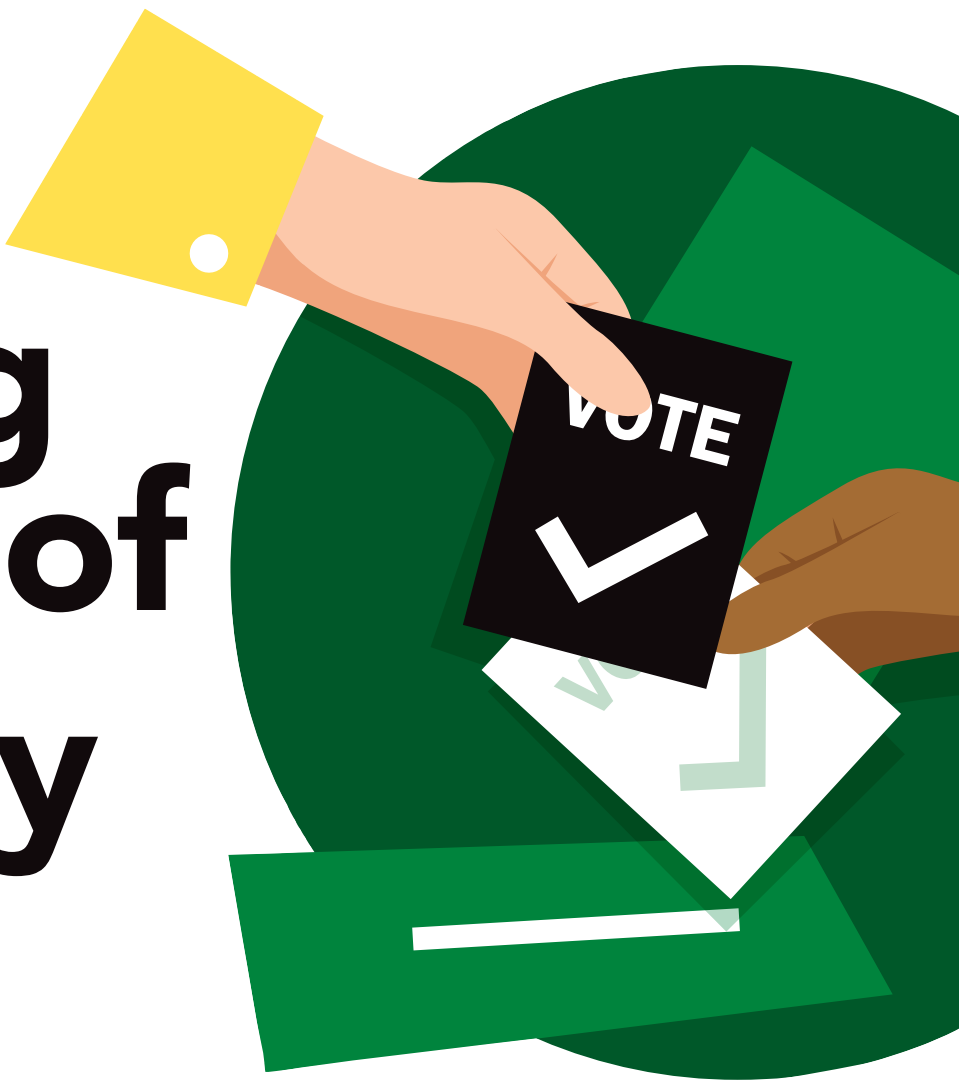
Usually, I do 10-hour shifts" he said. "I work with our fastest general surgeon, so eight to 10 cases a day. Laparoscopic gall bladder removals, bowel resections, mastectomies. I work with him two days a week. The other two days I work with a spine surgeon for spinal fusions, things like that."

### **Snowbirds for now**

VanTuyl's plan had been to retire to the house in Florida that his parents bought some 30 years ago. Then his daughter moved back to Michigan with his grandchildren, "so we're not going anywhere. We're snowbirds. At this rate, I'll probably work until I'm 70."

VanTuyl said the last time he visited SMC's campus was when he pinned his sister's son, welcoming the next generation of patient caregivers into the family.

# Living Proof THAT Every Vote Matters



**As** the youngest person elected to the Berrien County Board of Commissioners, Rayonte D. Bell learned at the outset of his political life the value of every single vote.

Bell was just 22 in his 2020 race with Republican Bruce Gorenflo after incumbent Bill Chickering retired. The contest ended in a 3,934-3,934 tie. On Nov. 16, the candidates pulled lots. Bell drew “not elected,” then sought a recount.

“The tie left me surprised,” he recalled, “because I didn’t really know what to expect that night. After the pulling of the lots, I was a little disappointed that despite the hard work we did during the campaign, my fate was determined by a drawing. Even as I sought the recount, I was convinced that



**“When we decide to be involved and use our individual and collective voice, we hold the power to do anything.”**

—RAYONTE D. BELL



the results wouldn't change and that Gorenflo would remain the declared winner. I guess God had other plans, and four people in District 5 helped me get over the finish line. I will always use that story as an example of how much every vote matters in elections."

As District 5 commissioner, Bell represents the City of St. Joseph and Precinct 1 (Fairplain) and Precinct 2 (including Shoreham) of St. Joseph Charter Township.

### **The Countryside connection**

Bell attended Countryside Academy outside Benton Harbor for grades 9-12, graduating in 2017. Classmate Chokwe Pitchford represents District 3 after challenging incumbent Pauline Wendzel for state House in 2020.

"We've only grown closer as friends since then," Bell said. "After transferring from SMC, and coming back to Benton Harbor during the summer of 2019, Chokwe had offered me the opportunity to join him, as he had been active in community organizing with community leaders like current state Rep. Joey Andrews, current Benton Harbor School Board Trustee Elnora Gavin, and organizers Siobhan Leonard and Gwen Swanigan.

"At the time, none with of us were elected officials, but we were taking initiative to address certain issues in our community. Chokwe helped me get involved with the work he and these wonderful people were doing, and they have all been with me up to this point. We're all good friends and help each other to help our community. Chokwe and I are working side by side on the Berrien County Board of Commissioners, trying to make society better the best way we can."

Bell shared that during his senior year at Countryside, SMC admissions advisor Marcus Roll sold him on the idea of getting a four-year college campus life experience at a two-year college for a fraction of the cost.

"We talked about my plans of pursuing architecture or engineering to eventually attend the University of Michigan," Bell said, "and he told me I could take the prerequisite courses and transfer after two years."

### **SMC developed his leadership skills**

Bell honed his leadership skills at SMC, helping co-found a Black Student Union with Jarel Mills.

As a freshman, Bell got involved with AKO (Alpha Kappa Omega Bible Study Club). "Being led by our staff advisor, Rachel Breden, along with Pastor Jeff Whittaker, really allowed me to thrive as I continued to grow in my faith. AKO helped me find a place on campus where I could share my love for God with other students, and even lead occasionally during campus worship services."

Mills originated the idea of starting a Black Student Union, "and I thought it was a great opportunity for us to help our fellow students have a space where we can gather and share our experiences with one another," Bell said. "Jarel and I were both coming into our sophomore year at SMC as student leaders of campus life.

"By being active as student leaders, we were able to use our social skills to gather other students and work with SMC staff, faculty, and administration to help form the Black Student Union."

Bell pursued engineering at SMC for three semesters, then transferred to Lake Michigan College to help his mother and younger siblings at home. After speaking with his academic advisor, he took prerequisite courses to transfer into Andrews University's architecture program.

"I did live on campus while at SMC," Bell said. "That made it much easier to socialize with other students. By being active on campus, I was able to develop leadership skills and gain experience working with fellow students, taking advantage of the amount of help I received from instructors, and building good rapport with school administration and staff. All of these are skills I've been able to use as a community leader. I have SMC to thank for that."

As a commissioner, Bell was appointed to the Finance Committee for 2024. He also serves on the Community Corrections Advisory Board; TwinCATS, a public transit study committee; Berrien County Mental Health Authority; Southwest Michigan

Behavioral Health's SUD (Substance Use Disorder) Board; Michigan Association of Counties; Judiciary and Public Safety Committee; Berrien County Broadband Internet Task Force; and has an appointment to the Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

What does Bell find gratifying about public service? "I love the fact that I am part of a team of community leaders who come from different backgrounds and have different perspectives in life, working together to make our community a better place to live, grow and prosper. It's such a humbling experience to be able to serve our community every day."

### **Restoring faith in government**

"Many people either don't really know what government does and how it impacts their lives, or they have lost faith in government, causing them to be rather apathetic and disengage.

"I strive to restore the public's faith in our government and to help make our society better. I encourage my peers to remember that their voice matters. I would remind them that we are not only the future, but we are the present as well.

"When we decide to be involved and use our individual and collective voice, we hold the power to do anything. I would also emphasize the word 'serve' in public service. We are servants to the people who elect us, and stewards of taxpayer dollars. We must be honest, deliberate, and determined to serve the citizens of our communities."

Besides his duties as commissioner, Bell is a recruiter for the Michigan State AFL-CIO (The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) Workforce Development Institute for the Benton Harbor area.

"My job is to introduce a pathway into a career in the skilled trades industry," he said. "Our nine-week training program prepares you with the necessary skills and knowledge to begin that journey into the trades as an apprentice. And we offer the training for free!"

Going forward, Bell said, "I see myself continuing my role as a servant, whether it is more in the church, in public office, or in my family. Any way, I'm committed to leading and walking by faith, serving and helping people be their best selves, and making life a little more fun, easier, and better."

# 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Women's Basketball Champions



**T**hey're mothers now of grown children and accomplished professionals in fields ranging from teaching and criminal justice to dental hygiene, marketing, and human relations. But when they get together, as they did January 20, 2024, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of their Southwestern Michigan College women's basketball Division II national championship, the years melt away.

Chris Warren Hatcher of Dowagiac; Sharon Patterson Doan of Bourbon, Indiana; Karen Harter Ganger of Goshen, Indiana; and Letha Insco West of Buchanan, whose daughter, Josie, plays volleyball for the Roadrunners, were freshmen on Coach Tom Barnes' 29-6 team.

Barnes came from Iowa to take the helm of a four-win program and guided it to a 46-23 mark his first two seasons before the historic third season.

The team returned for its 1994-95 season poised for another run at greatness, tearing through the regular season undefeated at 28-0 before heading to the Toledo tournament and



losing to a team they previously beat.

Victory road began with the defeat of Kankakee Junior College [Illinois] in the quarterfinals, 53-49. All-American Herilanda "Noopie" Thigpen and Beth Blake led the way with 18 and 12 points, respectively.

The next game wasn't won as easily. Top-ranked Mitchell College [Connecticut] wasn't willing to surrender its ranking. It took the Roadrunners two overtime periods to put the game away, winning by a final score of 94-87. Timothea Clemmer accounted for 25





but went on to obtain a master's. She's been a teacher for 22 years.

**Sharon Patterson Doan**

Doan came to Dowagiac from Bourbon. At 6-foot-4, she participated in basketball, tennis, track, and volleyball—earning 13 varsity letters, being named MVP her senior year in volleyball and tennis, and sharing the basketball MVP. She was inducted into Triton High School's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2017.

"If the national title seemed like it came out of nowhere to people, it felt like it," Doan said. She described it as surreal.

"I don't think it was ever in the back of our minds that we would get that far. The second season maybe we got overconfident. It was very humbling" when an undefeated season ended abruptly.

"The first season was just one day at a time," the power forward said. "We'd get insight from the coach as to what we needed to do, and I think that's what we focused on. You need a little bit of that Roadrunner luck, too."

Doan had landed a Division I scholarship to Northeastern Illinois University. The culture shift from tiny Triton to Chicago was overwhelming. "I got homesick," she said. Enter Coach Barnes. "I came up here, checked it out and signed," she said. "The rest is history."

From SMC, Doan transferred to what is now Bethel University in Mishawaka. She added a master's degree at Indiana Wesleyan.

"Here I studied graphic arts," Doan said. "I worked in marketing for a company for a long time. Then, somehow, I got into human resources, which is a little bit of a leap. In my marketing role, I spent a lot of time talking to people within organizations, so when we had an HR opening, they asked me to consider it."

"I hadn't been back to campus," said Doan. "It's so beautiful here. The fieldhouse is a lot nicer. It's great up here in the skybox."

**Chris Warren Hatcher**

Chris Warren came to SMC from Dowagiac and still lives here.

"I was good in high school, All-Conference" for the Chieftains, said Hatcher, #44. "When you get to college, everybody's good. I wasn't a starter, but it was a lot of fun. I was 5-foot-9."

"My plan was to go into the service. I talked to the recruiter and everything," Hatcher said. "But the recruiter didn't follow up, then I got a scholarship offer to play here. I studied criminal justice and work in juvenile probation. I also worked in a bank for a few years before I put in an application at the juvenile center in Berrien Center. I was a youth specialist. For the past two years I've been a reintegration officer. I've been with Berrien County since 1999."

After SMC, Hatcher completed a Bethel University degree.

"Even after I stopped playing, I coached," she said. "I can't believe it's been 30 years. I guess I should feel old."

"I think it was the chemistry of the players" that pushed the Roadrunners to the summit, Hatcher said.

**Letha Insko West**

A frequent presence at the fieldhouse during volleyball season rooting for daughter Josie's team, Letha Insko West of Buchanan said it was her first time watching current Roadrunner basketball. Her memories from 30 years ago are crystal clear.

"When we won regionals, it was like, 'What the heck, we're going to nationals?' Getting there the first year was amazing! We were all stars in high school, and coming here from a small farm town [LaCrosse in LaPorte County, Indiana] was culture shock. Karen and I were on the bench together, but we did our jobs when we had to. I was 5-foot-8, a small forward. We were never upset" about limited playing time.

"We had matching stuff (like Ganger's jacket)," West said, "so people looked at us walking through airports like we were someone. Coach Barnes did a really good job of recruiting. He discovered me at the Teachers Credit Union All-Star game in South Bend. I was planning to go to Indiana State. He offered me a scholarship, and I wanted to play basketball."

"I also wanted to study dental hygiene, so I did an associate in science, graduated from here and transferred to Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and played there. Now I'm a dental assistant at Afdent."

points, while Thigpen chipped in 20.

In the championship game, Blake put in 21 to lead all scorers. Clemmer had 20, and Ursula Jackson and Thigpen each contributed 11 to an 81-72 victory over Chattahoochee Valley Community College [Alabama].

Blake was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player while Jackson and Clemmer were named to the all-tournament team.

**Karen Harter Ganger**

Ganger, a special education teacher at Northridge High School in Middlebury, Indiana, arrived for the reunion wearing her pristine green #42 Lady Roadrunners jacket, which had been packed away for three decades.

"It was the most memorable experience in my life other than having children," Ganger said. "Winning the national championship was the best feeling on earth."

"Coach Barnes was always our powerhouse in believing," she said. "We put forth the most effort we could and pulled it off."

Originally from Elkhart, Indiana, Ganger wanted to play college basketball. "I toured some other schools, but when I met Coach Barnes and people here, I just felt at home and loved the smaller environment."

"When I graduated, I realized what an awesome education I received. We had relationships with the professors. They care about you, and you're not just a number. I transferred to Purdue and did not like it there as much." Ganger received an associate degree from SMC

2021 Speaker

# B r o a d e n s



Since speaking at Southwestern Michigan College's Outstanding Graduate Reception in May 2021, Jossalyn Rogalski was awarded "Distinguished Senior in Biology" last spring at Western Michigan University (WMU).

A member of WMU's Lee Honors College, Rogalski received one of the largest merit-based scholarships in higher education, valued at approximately \$90,920 over four years.

## Her Interest in Science



She was also the recipient of the Darrin Williams Memorial Scholarship, the highest award bestowed by SMC's Math/Science Department.

Rogalski, 21, graduated from WMU in December 2023 debt-free, with a degree in biology and a minor in chemistry. She has also studied environmental justice in Syracuse and Niagara Falls, N.Y.

In January, the 2016 Cass County spelling champion and 2020 Dowagiac salutatorian began a WMU master's degree in geography to continue using her Medallion scholarship.

Her bachelor's degree thesis research on tobacco product waste saw her walking to hundreds of homes and apartments in Dowagiac, Sister Lakes, and Twin Lakes since December 2022 to complete public surveys.

"I hoped to gain insight into why people litter these items so frequently, as well as the best policies to mitigate this waste issue," she said. "I originally wanted to create an interactive map showing the abundance of this litter in our region, but I was advised that would be too difficult to complete at my academic level, so I hope to complete a project like this in the future."

That's where a master's in geography comes in.

"What I ultimately want to do is still a question to myself," she said. "I would love to do anything hands-on with animals. Zoology has always been my number-one focus and interest in school, but along the way I've become more interested in everything to do with science."

"The mapping skills I will learn from (geography) courses are going to benefit me with whatever biology type of career I choose. I can map practically any topic, from endangered species habitats to contaminated sites. Geography ties into the conservation and land-restoration goals I have in mind. As long as I'm in a field that's beneficial to the environment, people, plants, and animals, I'm going to be happy."

Her New York experience with



graduate students exposed Rogalski to mapping systems, which were being used to document places impacted by lead poisoning, overlaid with regions that had high levels of violence and lower education levels.

"They showed the correlation between possible lead poisoning and learning deficiencies," she said. "Mapping helps us better understand every possible area of society and science, so geography could be a good route for me to pursue in the future. We mainly focused on environmental justice, such as how the practice of redlining negatively impacts lower-income or minority areas. We learned a lot about I-81 and how that highway impacted residents' health when lead paint chipped off and affected soils. I'm keeping up with the social media pages of all the organizations with which we worked because it's so fascinating. I'd definitely like to go back someday and see how they're doing."

#### **That cigarette butt is not biodegradable**

"Driving down the road I always see people throw out cigarette butts, which I collect in my spare time," Rogalski said. "It saddens me, so I wanted to see what the impacts were of leaving this waste in the environment. What type of chemicals were released? I did background research and wrote a very detailed paper over the summer, then spent a year editing my paper and completing my research."

"I had no GIS (Geographic

Information System) courses in my background," she said, "so I was advised to do the survey instead to gain insight on the public's view of cigarette waste, to see what people do and don't know about the after-effects of these products on the environment and what the public thought would be the best route to reduce this waste."

"I learned the public believes more education and more trash receptacles might be the best routes," she said. "I do believe more education would be beneficial because many people I spoke with viewed traditional cigarette waste as a biodegradable product. But my research proved this to be false. They're plastic-like and take many years, if not decades, to fully degrade."

#### **SMC's "homey feel"**

Rogalski, the first person in her family to graduate from college, "grew up" at SMC.

"I was lucky enough to become part of the Early Middle College program at 15, in ninth grade at Dowagiac Union High School. I will be eternally grateful. I did not have to spend a single dollar of my own to graduate with my associate degree."

"If students are concerned about costs, dedication and a strong work ethic can lead to success. That's certainly been the case for me."

"Another reason I love SMC is because it truly does feel like home, which is rare for most students at college."

"I grew up attending school in Dowagiac. All the extra-curricular events seemed to be held there on the SMC campus. I can recall Young Writers, Math-A-Rama, the spelling bee, and countless Educational Talent Search activities from sixth grade until high school graduation," including Weird Science camp in 2015 and Fire Academy in 2017.

"I have fond memories of SMC," Rogalski said. "I met some great people I'm still friends with today. The faculty seemed to care about us and got to know us, probably because of the close-knit feel."

# Full Circle WITH A Twist



Coming out of Union High School in 2006 as Dowagiac's All-Sports Award winner, Kim (Luthringer) Anderson was not ready to put her playing days behind her.

At that time Southwestern Michigan College, from which she earned 12 credits while still in high school and where she worked for six years preparing for her career, was on an extended hiatus from intercollegiate athletics. So Anderson enrolled at rival Lake Michigan College to continue playing softball while earning her associate degree in business administration.

"The energy and the vibes [at SMC] are awesome" with the return of cross

country in 2021, men's and women's basketball, women's volleyball, and men's wrestling in 2022, plus the addition of a co-ed bass fishing team.

"I would have liked to be part of that," Anderson said wistfully. "I follow (the Roadrunners) on social media and love seeing the success. It seems there's a really good thing going for students who come here. I didn't want to move far from home. I was looking for something affordable where I could still live at home and save money."

#### **The SMC experience as a Ferris student**

Anderson completed her bachelor's degree in business administration at SMC through the Ferris State



University program, graduating in 2010. She also pursued a master's degree through Indiana University South Bend.

While working at SMC, she joined the Young Professionals of Greater Dowagiac when it started.

She also traveled to Key West and West Virginia for whitewater rafting on trips Hall of Fame Cross Country and Track Coach Ron Gunn organized as extreme sports director.

### **When her brother retired, she was ready**

To say she has come full circle is true. She is in her fourth year as the DUHS counselor, plying similar skills she honed as SMC's lead admissions counselor and the year spent directing SMC's Educational Talent Search, which broadened her experience with middle schoolers. Both positions involve working with local school districts.

Anderson, who started at the college as a part-time outreach specialist, received her five-year service pin on Dec. 21, 2015, at the Board of Trustees meeting from Trustee Todd Obren.

But with a nudge from the COVID-19 pandemic, Anderson took full circle to another level.

When Randy Luthringer, her older brother, retired, she took his job. He was the one who inspired her to want to become a counselor in the first place.

She also served as a counselor in Marcellus for three years starting in 2017 after SMC, but continued to live in Dowagiac.

### **Not enough interaction in accounting**

"When I left high school, my plan was to be a school counselor," Anderson said, "like my brother. I admired what he did. He influenced my future plans, but they got sidetracked at LMC. I thought the route I would take to be a school counselor would be to be a teacher first, but I did not feel passionate enough about a subject to teach it every day.

"I felt a little lost for those two years about what I would do. I was an accounting major at first and took corporate tax accounting. I was also working, saw what my boss did every day, and decided that wasn't the path for me. I wanted something with more interaction.

"When the admissions job at the

college opened up, I loved that. I really enjoyed working with students, giving them ideas if they were undecided, going to the high schools and working with the counselors. To this day, that is still my favorite aspect of the school counselor role. That hasn't changed."

Recalling pandemic Zoom meetings, Anderson said, "I stayed at home for the weeks we had to, but as soon as I could go into the building in Marcellus, I was there. Working from home was not my jam. We were remodeling at the time, with furniture everywhere. My cat was climbing everything while we were trying to have meetings. It was not for me.

"I enjoyed the (SMC) role a lot of meeting students and families to plan what they would be doing after school, navigating career choices and planning events, like school visits or health career day. Every day was different. As a counselor, every day is still different."

### **COVID injected flexibility into staffing**

"Before, you needed a school counselor degree," she said. "Now, we have social workers and advocates who do short check-ins for behavior things where you don't have to have that credential. And there are new grant programs. Our district has school-based therapists who meet the highest tier of students who need services. We have a social worker and a school-based therapist." Her colleague, Student Advocate Susan (Skibbe) Baldwin, is a former Dowagiac police officer of 9½ years and a state Child Protective Services investigator/supervisor with a master's degree in social work.

"We're a great team," Anderson said, "because I focus more on career aspects and her specialty is social/emotional.

"All of the experiences I had with the college, including ETS, were so fitting for my role leading into school counseling," Anderson said. "Part of the job is helping students with their college classes and career navigation. Had I not had that experience, I would have had to learn so much. I'm so thankful for that because of the intricacies of the career and technical education world. Having all that was a perfect fit. There are so many avenues to help students pay for college. They need to take advantage of those opportunities, and I want to help them do that."





# 'I'm IN Music FOR THE Long Haul'



**W**yatt Marshall Noack, 24, graduated from Southwestern Michigan College in 2021 with honors and an associate degree in music. He then transferred to Indiana University South Bend (IUSB) to complete a year toward a bachelor's degree in music technology.

"Wyatt Marshall," as he's known professionally, is set to release his first rock album this summer as Y@.

Noack participated in the 2019 SMC's Got Talent show, performing an original song, "The Girl from Maple Row" and accompanying himself on guitar.

He was also part of SMC's first foray into radio theatre, playing the newscaster in "Terror on Dewey Lake," an original script by Assistant Director of Campus Life Branden Pompey.

It was produced and directed in October 2020 by his vocal teacher, Marcus Roll.

Noack was looking forward to the musical "Grease," but it was one of the first casualties when COVID closed campus in March 2020. By the following spring, he was cast in "Working," which was recorded before an empty theatre and viewed exclusively on YouTube.

Noack fronts Amarillo Sky, a cover band playing "country that rocks," performs with his pop project Sol Friends, and just joined a boy band. His original rock songs have been played on 103.9 The Bear.

"My goal is to make at least \$500 a week from music," Noack said, "but I'm at a point where last week, Sunday to Sunday, I made over \$1,000," plus he has a part-time day job.

#### **Dr. Joe sealed the deal**

Noack grew up with his mother in Elkhart but moved to Lago Vista, Texas,



“When I applied to (SMC), in less than a week I had a handwritten letter from Dr. Joe saying, ‘We’re excited to have you.’ I was ready to give up on reaching out to colleges. That handwritten letter changed everything for me.”

—WYATT MARSHALL NOACK

where his father lives as a senior in high school.

“Lago Vista had music technology class. Our iPads had GarageBand,” a software application for creating music or podcasts.

“I wrote more than 20 songs on my high school iPad,” Noack said. “I wanted to go to the University of Texas for music, but that was expensive. I had been in choir since middle school, but music really clicked in high school. All my friends were in choir, so it was my safe haven.”

Noack graduated high school in 2018 but less-expensive schools in Texas weren’t following up with him. “I applied to Indiana University and called, but never heard back. I applied to (SMC) and, in less than a week, I had a handwritten letter from Dr. Joe Odenwald (Vice President of Student Services, now President) saying, ‘We’re excited to have you.’ I was ready to give up on reaching out to colleges. That handwritten letter changed everything for me. That was the coolest thing in the world.”

#### Motivated from an early age

Noack, born in August 1999, began working in 2015 as a landscaper. In spring 2016, he joined Martin’s Supermarkets as a service clerk/janitor. He moved his way up to cashier and deli clerk in 2017.

In 2018, when he moved to Texas, he worked as a waiter at The Grille at Highland Lakes in Lago Vista. He was also a pet care associate at Pet Smart and a box office clerk at Cinemark.

After receiving his SMC acceptance letter and returning to Elkhart, in 2019 he began work at a local grocery store, remaining there for two years. In 2020, he joined the Crosbie Foundry, Elkhart. He stayed there until 2023 when he began working part-time as a pet care associate at Paw Mart.

“Everything has changed for me since I started at SMC,” he said. “I knew I wanted to further my education and was willing to do anything to show I wanted to work. Growing up in a one-parent household, there were times there wasn’t food on the table. I started working as soon as I got my driver’s license.”

#### His favorite band is Linkin Park

Though he fronts a country band named for a Jason Aldean song, Noack’s favorite band is alternative rock heavyweight Linkin Park. Their earlier

recordings fused heavy metal and hip hop. Later releases featured more electronica and pop elements.

“You can hear their music change throughout each album,” Noack said. “IUSB exposed me to mixing and mastering music, which I don’t think I have the ear to do professionally. But live sound—I run while I’m singing—I feel comfortable doing that. I met a promoter from Boston at IUSB. Eric Remington and I have been best buddies.”

Noack’s voice was still hoarse from Friday night at South Bend Chocolate Café and a four-hour Saturday show at The Venue in Angola. Gigs take him as far north as Grand Rapids, as far south as Fort Wayne. He’s opened for Derek Randall and the Jessie Campbell Band.

#### ‘The best feeling in the world’

“The best feeling in the world is being up on stage and the audience is singing to you” because of the song’s familiarity.

The pop group Sol Friends originated at IUSB when he was making music with Gabriel Hernandez, a keyboard player from Mexico City.

“We played everything, from what was popular with the kids on TikTok to the Beatles, Gloria Gaynor, George Michael, and Frank Sinatra,” Noack said. “Our motto was ‘playing everything that the family loves.’ It was just the two of us, so that’s where backing tracks came in when we needed more than voice and piano. On other occasions, we had guest singers and drummers.

“I’m turning it into more of a vocal group with a female singer, Jordan DeGraff. She started helping me with karaoke in August. She came in the first night and sang ‘Who’s Lovin’ You’ by the Jackson Five. The packed restaurant went dead silent to hear her amazing, beautiful voice. We just did our first show together at Howard Park in South Bend. I’ve got us booked for Evil Czech Brewery in Mishawaka, Waterford Inn in LaPorte, and Tri-Way Drive-In in Plymouth. We’re going places.

“Anybody can release anything nowadays,” Noack said. “The question is, did you work hard and put it out the right way? I’m not mad at people putting out homemade music, but for not taking the time to perfect it. I align myself with people I know are good people and aren’t in it for the money, but just to put out good music.”





Al Churchill's Journey from

# Manure TO Music AND Back TO Manure

**A**I Churchill graduated from Southwestern Michigan College in 1978 as one of the first music majors to earn an associate degree. Since then, his professional career has unspooled in three distinct acts, saving the best for last—the one inspired by a required SMC science course.

## The journey begins

Churchill, the son of dairy farmers, attended school in Dowagiac and Sister Lakes before his family moved to Jones and he transferred to Marcellus High School. It was there that he met David Purcell, SMC band and choir director.

"Dave (Purcell) kept me from joining the Navy when I was 17," Churchill said. "He came to my high school band room, met with me, and offered me a full-tuition scholarship at SMC. He was just starting the music program, and I was one of the

lucky ones who benefited for the rest of my life."

Churchill was primarily a brass player—tuba, baritone, trumpet—but also played saxophone and percussion.

When Churchill came to SMC, he planned to teach music. At Western Michigan University, doing both singing and instrumental music proved "too much," so he dropped his horn to stick with choral music.

It's not like he threw his music studies away, they just transitioned to a labor of love.

"I have enjoyed an unpaid job" as music director and worship leader at First

Baptist Church of Newberg for the last 35 years. He has also done substitute teaching with the Marcellus band.

## "Paid jobs"

Churchill, who is the father of SMC Business Professor Andrew Churchill, worked in the housing industry and as a middle manager in automotive supply. For the last 22 years, he has worked in renewable energy.

Churchill's first "career-changing job was with Sterling Corporation in White Pigeon. I started in production and was promoted to service manager. A year later I became a district marketing manager and had a seven-state marketing area.

"I then went to Holly Park Homes and worked as a production manager in the floor department. From there, I left Holly Park when they were closing down and became a part owner in a park model





business, Renaissance Homes.”

His “second career” found Churchill at CMI as a production worker. He was promoted to a shift supervisor within six weeks.

“Later, I was moved to the night shift maintenance supervisor and finished a 10-year career as a machine line supervisor. CMI was a tier-one supplier for automotive companies such as Ford, Chrysler/Dodge, Mitsubishi, and Nissan,” Churchill said.

### **SMC and renewable energy**

In addition to music, SMC exposed Churchill to renewable energy and the impact it could have.

“My first enlightenment to reducing pollution was Dr. McKinstry at SMC who taught a science class, Environmental Impact, before the DEQ [Michigan Department of Environmental Quality] was established,” Churchill said. “He had solar panels and a windmill at his home and demonstrated how they worked to his classes. I was fascinated. That one class got me thinking. Thanks to Dr. McKinstry, I had the drive to make our world a better place.”

In 1995, “I remember driving by the Waste Management site in Three Rivers. I said to my wife, ‘What a waste of gas.’ I checked with a friend of mine at Michigan Gas, and he said, ‘They can’t do anything with dirty gas.’ Little did I know what my part in making that methane useful and profitable for DTE would mean for me and the community.”

Churchill joined DTE Biomass Energy in 2002, finding “green gas energy so rewarding.” DTE hired him as a plant

operator, processing landfill gas and making it pipeline-quality.

He was pictured in the *Three Rivers Commercial-News* for a story, “Turning Trash into Energy.” The article traced how a few uneaten French fries thrown into a St. Joseph County garbage can could someday do their part heating a state office building in Lansing.

The process goes something like this: Once the fries enter the garbage stream, they are transported to Waste Management’s Westside Recycling for deposit in the Fabius Township landfill. Over time they are compressed under layer after layer of refuse. They decompose, producing large quantities of gas, which is captured, processed, and transported by pipeline to energy users across Michigan.

Coral Energy, a Shell Oil Co. subsidiary, contracted with Waste Management to build an on-site energy recovery plant. Two years after the Coral facility was built it was sold to DTE Energy. Its subsidiary, DTE Biomass Energy, assumed control of operating the plant.

The proximity of a 24-inch Consumers Power gas line crossing the Westside Recycling property between Chicago and Detroit made for an easy connection to transmit the natural gas. The 2006 article said enough gas was processed and distributed daily to provide fuel for the natural gas needs of 3,200 homes—enough for Three Rivers.

DTE Biomass had a total of 38 landfill gas recovery operations nationwide and was one of two DTE plants in the United States with this particular process.

### **Still capturing methane for energy**

Churchill was the DTE facility’s senior lead plant operator when he left last August for his current job.

He now works for Novilla RNG as a technical procurement manager.

RNG is essentially biogas, the product of the decomposition of organic matter, that has been processed to purity standards.

In September 2022, Novilla subsidiary Red Leaf announced construction of its first renewable natural gas (RNG) dairy project at Maple Row Dairy in Saranac, Michigan. The partnership uses biogas from the dairy’s anaerobic digester to generate low-carbon-density RNG, a pipeline-quality gas that is fully interchangeable with conventional natural gas vehicles.

“We are constructing new facilities on dairy farms to capture methane from cow manure,” he said. “My third job is the best. Joining Novilla is a continuation of capturing methane and using it for energy and reducing methane emissions into the atmosphere.”

### **Thankfulness for three careers**

“I enjoyed every minute of my time at SMC,” Churchill said. “It had a family feel. I felt like a big fish in a small pond at SMC versus a guppy in the ocean” at WMU.

It also helped Churchill find his vocation—developing renewable energy—and follow his avocation—making beautiful music.



In November 2023, Roadrunner alumni and All-Americans Joe Ofsansky, John Roscoe, and Tom Ellspermann reunited with Hall of Fame Coach Ron Gunn in the 1st Source Bank Fieldhouse on SMC's Dowagiac campus. They were recognized during halftime of the SMC Men's basketball game in honor of the 50th anniversary of the 1973 SMC Men's Cross Country individual and team championships—the first of an unprecedented three straight National Junior College Athletic Association cross country team championships for the Roadrunners.

Ofsansky and Roscoe, high school teammates from North Vigo High School in Terre Haute, Indiana, were two-time time All-Americans during their time on campus. They each won individual national titles as well—Roscoe in 1973 and Ofsansky in 1975. Ellspermann was also an All-American while at SMC.

What was most impressive about the 1973 national championship is what Coach Gunn and the Roadrunners accomplished. They beat teams from much larger schools across the country. Together, they brought the title home to SMC.

"Coach Gunn took us raw kids," said Ofsansky, "and turned us into national champions."

Members of the 1973 team included: John Aller, Dennis Bell, Bill Fries, Mike Ghyselink, Dave Hucksted, Brian Hudson, Bruce Marschke, Ed Muro, Don Pearman, Paul Pena, Brian Petroff, John Roscoe, Pat Tobin, Tim Tobin, and Bernie Zemen.

» For the latest news, visit [smcroadrunners.com](http://smcroadrunners.com)



# CHAMPIONS IN THE FIELDHOUSE



# More Exciting Than Ever



Spring has sprung on campus as we approach our 57th Commencement ceremony on May 4. (I'll be watching our graduates' mortar board decorations for any Star Wars references!) This year also marks the 60th birthday of Southwestern Michigan College, which was founded by a vote of local taxpayers on November 3, 1964, and has been providing access to high-quality postsecondary education to improve lives every day since.

Campus was buzzing after the watch party for the NJCAA Selection Show, where we learned the seeds and pairings for the Division II Women's Basketball National Championship. After winning the Great Lakes District B Championship, our Women's Basketball Team headed to Joplin, Missouri, to put a remarkable 26-4 record on the line in their quest to win a second national title, 30 years after the first in 1994.

In fact, all of our athletics teams have had very successful seasons, with winning records, postseason runs,

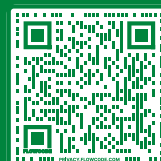
and national rankings. For instance, the Men's Basketball Team hosted the first playoff game on campus in more than 25 years, and SMC Wrestling, after qualifying the maximum of ten wrestlers, competed in early March at the NJCAA National Championships in Council Bluffs, Iowa, finishing #17 in the country.

It's a thrill for students and alumni alike to have intercollegiate athletics back in full swing. We again want to thank the ten families who comprise our Founder's Club for their generous and ongoing donations to help make this revival possible. And we aren't done yet—watch for some exciting announcements soon.

As you are making summer plans, please remember to join us on July 19 at 6:00 p.m. in downtown Dowagiac for the 50th Steve's Run. The golden anniversary of this race will be a special and memorable occasion for our community, so even if you aren't a hardcore runner, consider coming back for the evening or weekend to walk, cheer, eat some barbecue, and

Support the next generation of impact-makers through student scholarships.

Visit [swmich.edu/giving](https://swmich.edu/giving) to make a donation or scan the QR code.



Or mail your gift to SMC Foundation  
58900 Cherry Grove Rd.  
Dowagiac, MI 49047

celebrate with us.

Looking ahead, please keep our beloved SMC in your giving plans, and we hope to see you soon!

Mike O'Brien  
Vice President for  
Institutional Advancement

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**50<sup>TH</sup> ROAD AND TRAIL RACE** **STEVE'S RUN**

10K Run • 5K Run/Walk • Family Fun Run

**July 19, 2024  
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All proceeds benefit cancer research and the Southwestern Michigan College Steven Briegel Scholarship.

Register at [runsignup.com/stevesrun](https://runsignup.com/stevesrun)

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As a Michigan public community college, Southwestern Michigan College operates under the supervision of a locally elected board of trustees. The board members serve six-year terms and represent a broad range of backgrounds and geographic locations within the college's service area. Members of the board serve their constituents without compensation.



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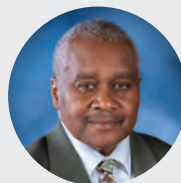
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