

# MARICOPA *Gold*

News from the Maricopa Community Colleges Retirees' Association

SPRING 2021

## Ann Oehmke: Serving Maricopa Colleges for 70 years

By Gordon Jesse

Maricopa Colleges has been home to many, many talented and committed individuals who have chosen to serve students and the community, but few have devoted so much of themselves, for as long, as Ann Oehmke. To celebrate her 90th birthday, we want to recognize her lifetime of work for MCCCC and our students.

Ann Oehmke started at Phoenix College Spring semester 1951, which began her amazing 70 year relationship with PC and MCCCC. She graduated from PC in 1953 and continued on to ASU to get her BS degree in physical education. In 1955, Ann started teaching at West High School, just a half mile from PC.

In 1962, the legislature established the community colleges in Arizona and separated Phoenix College from Phoenix Union High School District. In 1963 Ann moved from West High, beginning 24 years as faculty at Phoenix College.

Over the years at PC, she chaired and served on countless campus committees, coached numerous sports, served as advisor and department chair of Women's Athletics, was an advisor for physical education, and developed the first fitness facility for women's activities as well as the first Advisement Center in conjunction with the Counseling Department. By 1978 she was the acting Faculty Development Coordinator and, shortly thereafter moved into the position full time, staying in that position until her retirement.

Upon starting retirement, Ann took advantage of the District's Active Retirement Program and did her 49%, first at PC, then at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, and finally at the District Office. At PC, she continued assisting with staff development. At CGCC, she implemented a campus group called The Change Team, which was to serve as staff developers for the emerging college. At the District Office, she was part of the Think Tank program.

Following full retirement, Ann did not slow down, she just shifted gears. She is an active member of the Phoenix College Alumni Association (PCAA) and serves on the board of the Half Century Club (alumni who graduated more than 50 years ago).



Ann Oehmke

In 2008, Ann was made an honorary member of the Phoenix College Athletics Hall of Fame and in 2011, she was inducted into the Phoenix College Alumni Hall of Fame with their Legend Award. She joined other distinguished PC alumni such as former Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon, former Arizona Governor Rose Mofford, former

Arizona State Supreme Court Chief Justice Rebecca White Berch, and world-renowned artist Eric Fischl.

Ann helped start Maricopa Community Colleges Retirees' Association (MCCRA) for all district employees and has led the organization for over ten years. She has definite thoughts about the future of MCCRA. First, we need new people on the board, meaning more recent retirees, bringing new ideas and new energy. Second, she would like to see MCCRA sponsor online educational presentations for students in the areas of financial planning, budgeting, and money management.

In her spare time Ann is a self-described "political junkie." She reads the New York Times every day and volunteers with the District 24 Democrats. She loves to travel and often goes camping in her beloved Volvo station wagon. She is still active with the West High Alumni Association and is also a prolific gardener.

Ann is truly an exemplary student, employee, colleague, and citizen of our community. She has to have more motivation and energy than two people of any age. We are fortunate to have her with us and to count her as a colleague and friend. From all of us, thank you and Happy Birthday.

Log into **[www.mccrassoc.org](http://www.mccrassoc.org)** to read more about Ann and what people have to say about her.

## MCCRA Constitution Updated

The retirees' association needs to replace our current constitution because it reflects a different era in the Maricopa District. We no longer have the various employee groups that are identified, nor is our current board reflective of constitutional requirements. Read about proposed changes and vote for approval at **[www.mccrassoc.org](http://www.mccrassoc.org)**

## Governing Board Officers for 2021



*Susan Bitter Smith*



*Jean McGrath*



*Tom Nerini, Ed.D*



*Jacqueline Smith, J.D.*



*Marie Sullivan*



*Dr. Linda Thor*



*Kathleen Winn*



*Julissa Munoz*

The Maricopa County Community College District Governing Board held a special meeting on January 5, 2021, to determine Governing Board positions and welcome new members. MCCCCD Board members elected Ms. Marie Sullivan as President and Dr. Tom Nerini as Secretary. The seven Governing Board members are elected from five geographical districts within Maricopa County with two At-Large positions representing the entire county. Board members are elected in staggered years to four-year terms.

Representing District 3, Ms. Sullivan has been on the Governing Board since January 2018 and has served

as President previously. Dr. Nerini ran unopposed in District 5. Continuing Board members include Jean McGrath (District 4), Kathleen Winn (Member At-large) and re-elected Dr. Linda Thor (Member At-large). Newly elected members include Jacqueline Smith, J.D. (District 1) and Susan Bitter Smith (District 2). The first student member, Julissa Munoz, will continue to advocate for students through June 2021.

Serving on the MCCCCD Governing Board further strengthens our system and advances the work the Maricopa Community Colleges do in service of our students and community.

## Foundation's Vision for Success

Brian Spicker has been at the helm of the Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation as Interim, President and CEO, since coming on board in March 2019. The Foundation is pleased to announce that he has accepted the position as President and CEO in a permanent capacity, after receiving incredible support from the District, colleges, Foundation Board and staff.

Additionally, Judy Sanchez has been named Chief Development Officer after working to support the Foundation, District and Resource Development Council. Judy's scope of work has expanded significantly and she will be spearheading grants and the marketing and database analytics team, expanding the role of revenue management as the Foundation continues to position itself for success.

These announcements come as the Foundation undergoes a repositioning that includes Fiscal Director Diana Aguirre-Rosales, who oversees accounting and finance, emergency funding, scholarships and donor relations.

"These changes allow us to better focus upon such important areas as revenue generation, workforce development, planned giving, student emergency funding, more scholarship and program support aligning with our overall vision to improve lives through education," commented Spicker.

The Foundation administers the MCCRA Endowed Scholarship Fund. For more information about the Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation visit [www.mcccdf.org](http://www.mcccdf.org)



## Meet Your New MCCRA Board Members

### Betsy Hertzler

I am delighted to be joining the Board as scholarship chair and treasurer. The Association is doing great work in raising money for students and preparing employees for retirement. I was fortunate to have taught at MCC from 1980- 2013, first as a Counseling faculty and for the last 20 years as a History instructor. My History colleagues can attest to the fact that being History faculty is the best ever as we all love watching students' eyes light up as they make the connection between historical events and the present day - for example, the Black Death and our present-day pandemic.



*Betsy Hertzler*

### Dr. Margaret Macias

Dr. Margaret Macias joined the college district in 1985 and was a founding member of PVCC where she served as director of Financial Aid. She later worked at PC and served as chair of the Counseling Department for 10 years. Dr. Macias retired in 2008 and she enjoys playing golf and spending time with her grandchildren. Margaret likes to stay in touch with other Maricopa retirees and feels strongly that serving on the Board is an important way to continue to serve students and help new retirees.



*Dr. Margaret Macias*

### Sherry Harp Peabody

Sherry Harp Peabody is the new volunteer webmaster. She retired from CGCC as Library faculty in February 2011 after working 30 years as a librarian, junior high school teacher in Language Arts, Arizona History, and Reading. She has also taught Reading and the EDU 250 classes for Rio Salado and worked in the Rio Library. Sherry was born and raised in South Phoenix and Tempe and is a second generation Arizonan. She is the first person in her family to have achieved higher education and has always valued education and the tremendous impact it can make on a person and community.



*Sherry Harp Peabody*

### Dr. Jean Tease

Dr. Ethel Jean Tease is a Counseling Faculty Emeritus at Rio Salado. She worked in the District more than 49 years, first at PC and then Rio. Dr. Tease is a native of Arizona and has degrees from all three state universities. She taught in the areas of Counseling, Psychology, as well as leadership courses in higher education. She is an advocate for infusing diversity. Currently, she is teaching Introduction to Multiculturalism, an online counseling class for which she received the MCCCDC Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award in 2016 for the development of this class in an online format. As adjunct faculty, she continues to provide a positive influence on students.



*Dr. Jean Tease*

### Dr. Camilla A. H. Westenberg

PC Faculty Emeritus Dr. Camilla Westenberg coordinated Developmental English and chaired the early stages of the Developmental Education Program. She advised the NAACP/BSU and was a SAS advisor for the athletic department. She created a class titled "Rap Literature: The Oral Tradition" which she presents nationally and internationally. Her degrees include a BS in Music Education and English from the University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff; an MA in Communication from ASU; and a Doctor of Education in Curriculum Development from Nova University. She is a life member of the NAACP, currently serving as the Maricopa Country Branch NAACP 2ND vice president for political action. Her late husband of 26 years, Dr. Irwin S. Westenberg, taught Psychology at GCC.



*Dr. Camilla A.H. Westenberg*

**MARICOPA** *Gold*  
Maricopa Community Colleges Retirees' Association

MCCRA needs your expertise and experience. If you are interested in serving on the board, complete the form on page 7 or contact Ann Oehmke. If you have a couple hours free, you could help review scholarship applications.





South Mountain Community College celebrated its 40th anniversary with the South Phoenix Oral History Project and the SMCC Storytelling Institute. The long-awaited premiere of *Origins: 40 Years of South Mountain Community College* released on January 22, inviting communities from across Phoenix to tune in to experience South Phoenix and the college's history. Visit: <https://www.southmountaincc.edu/about/40th-anniversary-documentary>

## Emeritus Status Awarded

The Governing Board grants Emeritus status at its monthly meetings based on nominations of recently retired faculty and executive staff.

### SEPTEMBER 2020

Sue Anne Lucius, Music,  
Mesa Community College



### OCTOBER 2020

Dr. Cheryl Berg, Biology, Gateway Community College  
Dr. Debra Campbell, Philosophy and Religious Studies,  
Mesa Community College  
Loman Clark, Counseling, Phoenix College  
Dr. Linda Collins, Information Technology, Mesa  
Community College  
Hazel Davis, Library Services, Rio Salado College  
Carol Dichtenberg, Library Services, Chandler-Gilbert  
Community College  
Robert Galloway, Art, Mesa Community College  
Tina Rangel, Dance, Mesa Community College  
Linda Speranza, Ceramics, Mesa Community College  
Ruth Yandell, Music, Mesa Community College



## What Are You Doing in Your Retirement?

Send in your stories about travel, hobby or volunteer activities you are enjoying. Just a paragraph will do. If you don't want to commit to an article, send us your photos with explanations. Email info or photographs to editor: [patti.n.johnson@cgc.edu](mailto:patti.n.johnson@cgc.edu)

## Maricopa Colleges: High Quality, Not High Costs

The Maricopa County Community College District, the largest community college system in the nation, is built on high quality — not high costs. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our communities in unimaginable ways. In many cases, it has greatly impacted college plans due to concerns with being able to afford tuition.

Tuition and fees for MCCCCD classes (\$85 per credit hour and on an average annual cost of just over \$2,500 for full-time students) are considerably lower than those at other Arizona universities and private colleges.

To provide additional assistance, the Maricopa Community Colleges offer two new tuition discounts for Maricopa County residents and Out-of-State residents residing in Arizona.

- Students with in-state residency status are eligible for a \$1,020 flat tuition rate. The flat rate applies when enrolling in 12.5 - 21 credits.
- Students with out-of-state residency status residing in Arizona are eligible for an \$85 per credit hour tuition rate.



# Retirement Expert Shares Tips for a Successful Transition

By Gordon Jesse

Over the 20 years Tim Clement worked as the MCCCC Retirement Analyst, he was able to meet with countless employees and assist them in their transition from work years to retirement. He learned the process of ASRS, Social Security, and many of the private 403b retirement plan carriers (TSAs).



Tim Clement

He says the one thing people told him through their experience with him was, "Tim, you should start a business to do this," and when MCCCC discontinued this service, many upset employees contacted him wanting to have a meeting. While still working for MCCCC, it would have been a conflict of interest for him to run a business of this nature, but since his retirement in December of 2020, and having some time off, he decided to start that business, TLC Transition Counseling c\_tim52@yahoo.com.

Tim now divides his time between a new retirement home in Colorado and his fledgling business. He recently shared some tips for planning for retirement and working with a service such as his.

First, he explained what a retirement service is. It assists people in making the huge step of going from employment to retirement. The goal is to help the employee understand the administrative process of the employer (in our cases, MCCCC), Arizona State Retirement System, and Social Security. Individuals' needs for retirement differ as much as people do and homogeneous seminars provide some information, but typically do not address the unique questions of individuals.

Tim says some of the common erroneous assumptions that employees make regarding the three agencies, (employer, ASRS, and SS) are:

- The three agencies work together.
- The three agencies have the same definitions of terminology.
- The three agencies' deadlines and requirements are the same.

Further, he shared some of the typical mistakes that potential MCCCC retirees make:

- Failure to take advantage of online information.
- Not fully understanding notice requirements and what they mean.
- Not exploring health insurance options.

Tim has the following tips for using his or any retirement counseling service.

- Contact the service 10 months before retirement.
- Have distinct goals to plan for.
- You should be given information to gather to assist in achieving your goals.

He stresses that there are time constraints, and some data may be difficult to obtain, so he advises to be aware of the 10-month window and plan ahead.

He added that a good retirement counseling service should understand that everyone has a different perception of value, therefore the service should not make decisions for its clients. Rather it should provide information and education, and assist the client in understanding the information available, so the client is able to make the best decisions for themselves and their family.



Finally, Tim reminds us that a counseling service does not replace the need for a financial planner, estate planner, and meetings with Social Security. Rather, a good retirement counseling service should assist the client in understanding the information from these sources so their transition into retirement is as smooth as possible.

Arguably, retirement is the biggest change in our lives since we finished school and joined the workplace. Tim has helped thousands of Maricopans transition into retirement and we would do well to heed his advice.



# Immersive Van Gogh Exhibit Comes to Phoenix Claiming "It's safe to Gogh"

By Caryl Terrell

From Paris to the heart of Phoenix, comes the legacy of one of Western art's greatest artists, whose paintings are among the world's most expensive ever sold. An art lover's dream, this installation, "Immersive Van Gogh," will debut in a secret Phoenix location. The exhibit is known for its transformation of venues into unforgettable art experiences that strive to highlight the unique architecture of its spaces while integrating influences from its history and community, transporting the art lover immediately upon stepping inside.

Viewers will experience art like never before, putting them in the center of the Dutch post-Impressionist's masterpieces like "The Potato Eater" (1885), "Sunflowers" (1888), "Starry Night" (1889), and "The Bedroom" (1889). The exhibit was conceived and designed by Massimiliano Siccardi, with an original soundtrack by Italian multimedia composer Luca Longobardi, who together pioneered immersive digital art experiences in France.

"Despite being unknown throughout his life, Van Gogh's artwork has created a lasting impact through its emotional richness and simple beauty," said Siccardi. The exhibit, which opens July 29 and runs through September 26 (tickets range \$40-\$100 and \$30 for children under 17), is an hour-long, walk-through experience, that features

large, animated projections of Van Gogh's work. [www.vangoghphx.com](http://www.vangoghphx.com)

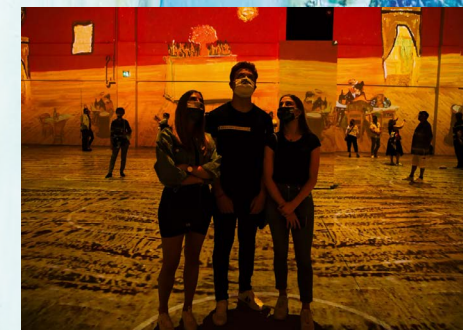
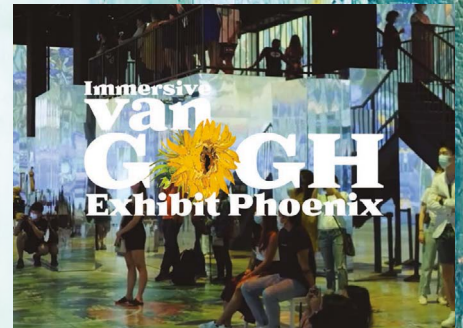
**"For my part, I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream."**

*Vincent Van Gogh*

Due to Covid-19, the exhibition will include specific precautions: limited capacity, touchless ticket-taking, temperature checks at entry, hand sanitizer stations, social distancing markers throughout the venue, digitally projected social distancing circles on the gallery floors and a requirement that guests must wear a face covering at all times.

Producer Corey Ross shared, "Hundreds of thousands of guests have seen 'Immersive Van Gogh' in small, socially distanced safe groups. It is an honor to bring the arts back into peoples' lives during these times."

Vincent Willem Van Gogh (1853-1890), who posthumously became one of the most famous and influential figures in the history of Western art, created about 2,100 artworks, including around 860 oil paintings over the course of a decade, most of which date from the last two years of his tortured life. His work included landscapes, still lifes, portraits and self-portraits, characterized by bold colors and dramatic, impulsive and expressive brushwork that contributed to the foundations of modern art. Van Gogh, whose life was plagued by mental illness and depression and did not take up painting until 1881, was not a commercial success during his lifetime. He was considered a madman and a failure, and in a rage, severed part of his own left ear with a razor. He died in poverty by suicide at the age of 37. In the 20th century, Van Gogh finally achieved the widespread critical acclaim and popularity that eluded him in life.



## 2021-2022 Dues Renewal • Maricopa Community Colleges Retirees' Association

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Check if any info is new \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Street

City

State

Zip

Phone: Home ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Other ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Dues are \$25/year valid from July 2021 through June 2022.

Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: MCC Retirees' Association

SURVEY: How would you prefer to receive your Maricopa GOLD newsletter?

Mail to: Betsy Hertzler, Treasurer • MCC Retirees' Association (MCCRA)  
2411 W. 14th Street • Tempe, AZ 85281-6942

Printed/Mailed \_\_\_\_\_  
Online \_\_\_\_\_

## Maricopa Community Colleges Retirees' Association 2021-2022 Board Nomination or Self-Nomination Form

In nominating someone other than yourself, please confirm the nomination with the nominee. Be sure to indicate the appropriate employee group and contact information.

I nominate: \_\_\_\_\_ to be a candidate for the 2021-2022 MCCRA Board.

Please check employee group

\_\_\_\_ Faculty \_\_\_\_ MAT/CEC

\_\_\_\_ PSA \_\_\_\_ M&O/Crafts/Public Safety

Contact info/email:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Nomination form can be mailed with dues form to:

Ann Oehmke  
500 W. Clarendon, E13  
Phoenix, AZ 85013

Or email information to: [aehmke@cox.net](mailto:aehmke@cox.net)

## Maricopa Community Colleges Retirees' Association Endowed Scholarship Fund

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Check if any info is new \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Street

City

State

Zip

Phone: Home ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Other ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Retired from which college \_\_\_\_\_

You can contribute in several ways to MCCRA Endowed Scholarship Fund. You may write a check.

Mail to: Maricopa Community College Foundation  
2419 West 14th Street • Tempe, AZ 85281

Or you can donate online at: <http://mcccdf.org/>

Either way, please indicate you are supporting the MCCRA Endowed Scholarship. A receipt will be sent to you.

## Welcome to the PEOPLE edition

This issue of Maricopa GOLD is full of people – people you may know and people you should know. These people deal with issues of interest to retirees of the Maricopa College District. You have access to these people who make decisions that may affect your life. So, let us introduce you . . .

## More Time to File Taxes

The U.S. Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service announced an extension of the 2020 tax filing deadline by approx. a month to May 17, 2021. The date has been extended “to help taxpayers navigate the unusual circumstances related to the pandemic.” No penalties or interest will be charged.



## Join MCCRA, Donate to Scholarship Fund

Dues for MCCRA are \$25 per academic year due July 1. A bargain for newly retired Maricopans who receive their first-year membership FREE. Use the enclosed form on page 7 to submit your membership dues now. Stay connected after retirement: [www.mccrassoc.org](http://www.mccrassoc.org)

While you have your checkbook or credit card out, consider making a contribution to the MCCRA Endowed Scholarship Fund, which includes the Dr. Mildred Bulpitt Endowed Scholarship. Every donation is appreciated.

## MCCCD COVID-19 Updates

Check out MCCCD's COVID-19 Web site at:  
[together.maricopa.edu](http://together.maricopa.edu)



## Maricopa Colleges Network Outage

On Tuesday, March 16, MCCCC identified suspicious activity within the IT network. As soon as this activity was detected, the college district implemented incident response protocols, disconnected external access to the network, and took systems offline. The initial investigative results indicate that the suspicious activity appears related to the early stages of a cyberattack. MCCCC is working on a full recovery solution. The start of classes after Spring Break was delayed a week until March 29, but employees returned to work on March 22. Your access to Maricopa email, web pages and other systems was affected and you will need to reset passwords and follow instructions to reconnect to MCCCC. For specific information and updates, check out: <https://www.maricopa.edu/system-status>.