

The Conquistador

Fall 2023 THE MAGAZINE OF DODGE CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PAGE 11

Transfer Student Part of
Winning Engineering Team

PAGE 20

Coach Smith Has
Left the Field

PAGE 24

Conquistador Fall
Homecoming in
Pictures

PAGE 8

New Era for Band

Marching Band Program
Begins with New Drumline



Contents

1

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

How We Conquer

2

CAMPUS NEWS

Conq Corral

8

IN THE CLASSROOM

Cover Story:
New Era for Band



10

Vocal Music Room
Receives Upgrades

11

Transfer Student Part of
Winning Engineering Team

12

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Graduate Named
Residence Life Director

12

State Report Shows
Increase in DC3 Enrollment

13

Conq Care Cabinet
Program Expands

13

DC3 Nursing Program
Ranked No. 1 in Kansas

15

DC3 Celebrates Its 87th
Graduating Class

19

Rogers Named
Distinguished Alumnus

20

OUR HISTORY

Coach Smith Has
Left the Field

22

Thank You, Howie

23

ON THE FIELD

Former Conq Playing
Football in France

24

Conquistador Fall
Homecoming in Pictures

27

DC3 FOUNDATION NEWS

From the Director's Desk

28

Building a Legacy,
Strengthening a Community

29

Gala-ry of Ghouls!

The Conquistador

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DC3 BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL ENROLLMENT

2,311

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE

12

STUDENT-TO-FACULTY RATIO

17:1

STUDENTS FROM

40 STATES

40 COUNTRIES

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

17

STUDENT GENDER

52% FEMALE

48% MALE

How We Conquer



I would like to welcome you to the fall issue of the Conquistador magazine. Within its pages, you will find positive, upbeat stories about the amazing things happening at Dodge City Community College (DC3).

Building on the success and excitement of last semester, we continue to physically update and upgrade our campus buildings and landscape, and we continue to set a very high bar for excellence in academics and athletics.

Our student enrollment is up, our nursing program is ranked No. 1 in the state, and our football team is headed to a bowl game. In addition, our Nov. 4 football game was featured on ESPN+, and the game ball was delivered to the field via one of our DC3-Arizona helicopters! And these are just a few of the wonderful things happening in Conq Nation.

I often say that our job is simply to recruit, to retain, to educate, and to graduate. And based on the articles included in this magazine, you can see that we are taking these four tasks seriously.

Go Conqs! Together we conquer!

Sincerely,

Harold Nolte, ed.D.

President

Conq Corral

Conqs on campus and around our community.



LAKIN SCHECK

DC3 hosted its 2023 Employee Recognition Banquet on May 4, in the Great Western Hotel building at Boot Hill Museum. Employees who have been employed at DC3 for five, 10, 15, and 20 years were honored for their dedication to the college. Because the five-year designation was new at this year's event, any employees with five to nine years of employment were recognized in this category. Pictured, left to right, (for 20 years) are Dr. Jane Holwerda, Vice President of Academic Affairs; (for 15 years) Theresa Ochs, Child Development Center Director; Laurie Barb, Professor of Cosmetology, (for 10 years) Brian Johnson, CDL Coordinator/Instructor; Melanie Smith, Director of Advising; Kerry Kuplic, Associate Professor of Vocal Music; Michelle Richardson, Associate Registrar; Maria Rojas, Director of Adult Learning Center; and Andrew Nolan, Purchasing/Central Stores Office. Not pictured in the 10-year category are Dr. Mary Scott, Professor of Biology; and Greg Stelle, Maintenance Carpenter.



LAKIN SCHECK

Pictured, left to right, (for five years) Dr. Harold Nolte, President; Dr. Mechele Hailey, Dean of Nursing and Allied Health; Dr. Anthony Aragon, Professor of Biology; Stephanie Gruver, Professor of Mathematics; Tina Briseno, Professor of Cosmetology; James Burkhard, Security Officer; Jennifer Lix, Associate Professor of Nursing; Sherry Curtis Rogers, Professor of Physical Science; Ginger Rupp, Professor of Nursing; Jorge Estrella, Director of Student Achievement and Resources Center; Todd Gilman, Support Engineer; Daemian Serna, Maintenance/Grounds; Heather Smith, Director of Wellness Center/Athletics Administrative Assistant; Josue Gomez, Director of Financial Aid; Michael Webster, Assistant Vice President of Information Technology/CIO; Jay Gooldy, Instructor of English; Bennie Wiley-Bethea, Campus Counselor; Daniel Dawson, GED/ESL Instructor; Kristi Ohlschwager, Assistant Vice President of Administration and Human Resources; and Christina Haselhorst, Director of Foundation and Community Relations. Not pictured are Kamilla Blackwell, Maintenance and Facilities Administrative Assistant; Marcus Coca, Maintenance/Grounds; Nikki Debnam, Associate Professor of Nursing; Corey Garcia, Maintenance Carpenter; Justin Hergert, Fleet Operations Manager; Dr. Adam John, Provost; Kathryn O'Neil, Associate Professor of English; Tracy Reynolds, Professor of Nursing; Jacob Ripple, Athletic Director; Maria Sanchez, Custodian; Jared Stevens, Director of Facilities and Operations; and Joshua Thompson, Director of Security.



EMILY BERRY

As part of Nursing Home Appreciation Month, three Conquistadors assisted with the annual obstacle course at The Shepherd's Center in Cimarron, on June 13. Those representing DC3 included Emily Berry, Admissions Representative; Courtney Huff, Student Activities Coordinator; and Alexandra Sibrikova (pictured above in a blue sweatshirt), sophomore, Moscow, Russia.



LANCE ZIESCH

Approximately 170 DC3 students, administration, faculty, and staff participated in the 2023 Dodge City Days Western Parade on July 29. Several college vehicles—including entries from TRIO Student Support Services and the Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO)—joined the college's nearly block-long lineup. In addition, student-athletes and coaches representing the men's basketball, football, rodeo, track and field, and men's and women's soccer teams—as well as representatives from the college's Advising, Foundation, Marketing, Nursing, Security, and Transportation departments—took part in the festivities.



LARIN SCHECK

The DC3 Adult Learning Center (ALC) hosted its Class of 2023 graduation ceremony at 10 a.m., on June 30, in the DC3 Little Theatre. A total of 34 students received high school diplomas, although not all were in attendance. Following the ceremony, the graduates celebrated by throwing their caps into the air.

Conq Corral

Conqs on campus and around our community.



LANCE ZIESCH

As part of the 2023 Hispanic Heritage Week, Sept. 18-22, the DC3 Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO) club sponsored a free cookout on Sept. 21 on the college quad. The menu featured hamburgers and hot dogs, grilled by employees of Black Hills Energy, and Mexican street corn, potato salad, chips, brownies, and drinks, prepared by Great Western Dining. The week's festivities culminated with the Fiesta, Don't Siesta Dance, in the Old Gym, on Sept. 22.



LARINI SCHECK

The newest student club on campus, the BizConqs Business Club, volunteered to help the Ford County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) staff members clean and organize their offices on Oct. 25. Pictured (left to right) are Benjamin Cuellar, Instructor of Business and BizConqs advisor; Alex Vazquez, freshman, Dodge City; and Jadon Nau, sophomore, Dodge City.



LANCE ZIESCH

Nearly 120 students participated in the DC3 Fall Transfer Fair, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., on Sept. 7, in the DC3 Library. The fair, which is designed to help students explore their options after DC3, featured representatives from 29 four-year colleges and universities from around the state of Kansas, as well as schools from Arizona, Oklahoma, and Texas. In addition to free snacks and water, the first 100 students also received free T-shirts.



LAKIN SCHECK

The DC3 Symphonic Band and the Dodge City Symphony Orchestra performed their fall instrumental concert on Oct. 12, in the DC3 Little Theatre. Directed by Joel Vinson, and assisted by Katherine Bowden, the concert featured a variety of selections including “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice” and music from “The Planets,” “The Phantom of the Opera,” and “Orpheus in the Underworld,” amongst others.



LAKIN SCHECK

The DC3 Music Department presented “The Haunted Theatre of Jazz” concert on Oct. 26, in the DC3 Little Theatre. The concert, which was directed by Joel Vinson, Band Director, featured performances by the DC3 Jazz Ensembles.

Conq Corral

Conqs on campus and around our community.



The DC3 Tech program hosted its annual Career Exploration Day at the Western State Bank Expo Center on Oct. 11. A total of 1,150 middle school and high school students, from 24 schools, had the opportunity to explore the various technical programs offered at DC3. Above, nursing student Chad Haun, sophomore, Dodge City, speaks with a student during Career Exploration Day.



On Nov. 14, Kansas Supreme Court Justice Eric S. Rosen (left) and Chief Judge Bruce T. Gatterman of the 24th Judicial District visited the Little Theatre as part of the court's outreach program to local schools. Gatterman, who is a 1973 DC3 graduate, also served as the college's Distinguished Alumnus in 2019.



DC3 hosted its 23rd annual Halloween celebration on Oct. 29. Like the past few years, it was a drive-through Trunk-or-Treat event in the Fine Arts parking lot. And despite the bitterly cold weather, 296 kids received candy from 18 trunks/stops. Per tradition, the cost of admission was one nonperishable food item per child, and the food collected was given to the Kansas Soldiers' Home at Fort Dodge. Pictured (left to right) are Camryn Lenz, sophomore, Dodge City; Toni Gabaldo, sophomore, Gladewater, Texas; Allyson Hamblin, freshman, Wichita; and Emily Yelton, freshman, Borger, Texas.



60%

DODGE CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE STATE TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

What are these tax credits?

- To address maintenance, equipment, and project needs for community colleges, the state of Kansas has established the Community College & Technical College Contribution Tax Credit Program that runs through 2026.
- The tax credit equals 60% of the total donation each taxable year to Dodge City Community College (DC3). Tax credits per taxpayer cannot exceed \$250,000 per tax year. First come, first served until \$500,000 in tax credits is reached for DC3.

How does this work?

- This program allows DC3 to utilize these funds on deferred maintenance projects such as renovations to a new weight room (nearly complete!), an updated automotive program facility, and existing space for a new industrial maintenance program.
- Funds donated to the DC3 Foundation through this program will be applied to these project invoices directly.
- Example: A taxpayer makes a contribution of \$10,000 to the DC3 Foundation. They would receive a state tax credit for \$6,000. They may be eligible to deduct \$4,000 as a charitable donation on their federal return (DC3 Foundation is a 501c3 organization).

Donations and Tax Credit Amount Examples:

Donation	Kansas Tax Credit
\$ 1,000.00	\$ 600.00
\$ 5,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
\$ 25,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
\$ 100,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
\$ 250,000.00	\$ 150,000.00

For more information or to donate, please contact:

Christina Haselhorst,
Director of Foundation & Community Relations

📞 620-225-9171

✉️ foundation@dc3.edu

🌐 www.dc3.edu/foundation-alumni/campaigns



#TogetherWeCONquer



DC3 STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

DC3 Flight Instructor Program Is Top-Notch

As a major in the U.S. Air Force and a former F-16 instructor pilot, I know excellence when I see it. The Dodge City Community College staff here in Arizona, both administrative and instructional, consistently demonstrate a commitment to excellence that matches the very best I've seen in the Air Force.

Their eagerness to help students succeed, whether in the classroom or in the helicopter flight program, is unmatched by any other civilian program I know. The friendly, welcoming demeanor of the administrative team, combined with the knowledge and individualized effort of the instructors, provides every student a clear path to becoming a college-educated, professional helicopter pilot.

Terry Blakemore
2023 Flight Instructor Program Student
Chandler, Arizona



Terry Blakemore

COURTESY OF DC3-ARIZONA



This fall, the marching band program began with a new drumline. Meet the ConquistaCorps!

LANCE ZIESCH

New Era for Band

Marching Band Program Begins with New Drumline

by Lance Ziesch

When Dodge City Community College (DC3) first launched a marching band last fall, it was initially dubbed the “Marching Conqs” or “Marching Conquistadors.” However, according to Band Director Joel Vinson, he was not satisfied with that name, because it didn’t really set DC3 apart from other college marching bands.

“When we began testing names, ConquistaCorps was one that we all thought would give us a unique identity,” he said, regarding the name that was eventually adopted.

And when it became time to consider uniforms for the new ConquistaCorps, Vinson said he wanted those to be unique, too. So, he gave the designer very general information, which included the DC3 school colors and the Conquistador mascot logo—and a special request to add a purple gradient to the final product.

“We decided to go with uniforms through McCormick’s, a marching band company specializing in audio, color guard, and accessories,” he said. “They recently began producing uniforms in competition with other major companies.”

So, once the initial design came back, Vinson presented it to the members of the ConquistaCorps, who then gave feedback and suggested changes.

“The band members looked at other concepts and designs the company had created in the past, and they told me the elements they liked the most,” he said.

After a few quick edits, the final design was ready, and the uniforms, which are comprised of a jacket, bibbers (overalls), a hip cape, and an Aussie hat, arrived in early August, while the group was on campus for band camp.

“This year at band camp, when I realized we would not have enough wind players to field an actual marching band, I immediately shifted our focus to creating the best percussion ensemble possible,” he said. “This allowed us to utilize our field mallets for the front ensemble and almost all our drumline equipment,” he said.

In addition to his efforts, he also gratefully credits Katherine Bowden, Percussion Assistant, for her help in creating the drum corps.

“I selected a repertoire designed for marching percussion ensembles,” he said. “And she selected all of our cadences and taught proper percussion technique to all of our non-percussionists.”

Currently there are 18 students in the band, and those 18 students perform on five snare drums, two tenors (quints), four bass drums, and three to four cymbals.

“We have enough drums for five snares, three tenors, five bass drums, and four marching cymbals,” he said. “However, only nine members are actual percussionists. The other nine play wind instruments, including flute, clarinet, saxophones, trombone, baritone, and tuba. Those students perform on their original wind instruments for pre-game and pep band and switch to percussion for halftime.”

The ConquistaCorps performed at all home volleyball and football games this fall, and during the football halftime shows, they utilized a front ensemble that included a xylophone, bells, vibraphone, and marimba. And because they are also members of the DC3 Pep Band, the ConquistaCorps will also perform at all home men’s and women’s basketball games and will travel with them for national tournaments.

In addition, this year the drumline performed at the Kansas State Fair, the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) Marching Festival, the High Plains Marching Festival at Fort Hays State University (FHSU), and other area community events, such as the Walk to End Alzheimer’s.

“This year’s show requires that our mallets play on tom drums and cymbals, which are attached to the mallet frames, and the audience can see them switch back and forth,” Vinson said. “Our goal next year is to build off of the drum corps and have a full marching band.”

As he prepares for 2024, Vinson said he wants to remind the public that the DC3 band program is open to all DC3 students and all community members. And private instruction in woodwinds, brass, and percussion also is available to anyone who is interested.

“Three of our percussionists, who are on cymbals, were new to band this year,” he said. “If students want to get involved, but have never played an instrument or do not know the ones used in marching band, then percussion is an excellent place for them to begin.”

Although Vinson said the band has exceeded his expectations this semester, he is excited to see the program grow as he continues to field a full marching band.

“One of my biggest goals for the ConquistaCorps is to field a competitive indoor marching ensemble soon,” he said. “As the marching band grows, so will our symphonic and jazz bands and the symphony orchestra. There is a new tradition being built at DC3!” ■



LAKINSCHECK

The new marching band uniforms are comprised of a jacket, bibbers (overalls), a hip cape, and an Aussie hat.



LANCEZIESCH

The ConquistaCorps drumline performed at halftime of the Homecoming game on Sept. 30 at Memorial Stadium.



In addition to new paint and floor covering, the renovation of the DC3 vocal music room also included the installation of new Melhart risers.

Vocal Music Room Receives Upgrades

by Lance Ziesch

The vocal music room in the Dodge City Community College (DC3) Fine Arts building recently got a facelift with new paint and equipment.

Associate Professor of Vocal Music, Kerry J. Kuplic, said the idea for the project grew out of a conversation he had had several months ago with Dr. Jane Holwerda, DC3 Vice President of Academic Affairs.

“She suggested I do something to bring some color and visual vibrancy to the room,” he said. “It was a real light bulb moment for me. It started with a gorgeous purple accent wall and evolved from there.”

Holwerda, who has collaborated with many faculty members over the past couple of years to enhance the learning environment of the college’s instructional spaces and classrooms, said the vocal music room had been overlooked inadvertently when the instrumental music room was updated about four years ago.

As a result of their conversation, renovation work officially began in fall 2022 and concluded in August 2023. Up first were repairs to the vocal music room’s walls and ceiling tiles, which included the removal of any leftover archaic technology.

“Once the risers were removed, the degraded condition of the flooring was exposed,” Holwerda said. “It was such that it couldn’t be repaired and would have to be replaced.”

So, Holwerda and Kuplic spoke with Jared Stevens, DC3 Director of Facilities and Operations, about some flooring possibilities. Stevens suggested having Guthrie Floor Covering, of Dodge City, install the same type of flooring that recently had been used in the Computer Science building.

“The new flooring is really lovely,” he said. “People still talk about how nice the floor is!”

After the structural remodeling was complete, the next subject of concern was finding a replacement for the vocal room’s aging and “well-used” Wenger risers, which Holwerda and Kuplic estimate were installed in 1970 when the Fine Arts building was built.

“I researched several companies that built risers for choral classrooms,” he said. “And we selected Melhart, from whom I had ordered equipment from in the past.”

After the new risers arrived on campus, Kuplic said they were assembled by DC3

maintenance staff. And when put in place, he said they instantly improved the entire flow of the room.

“The new ones fit the room beautifully,” he said. “They also provide a huge aesthetic appeal and some much-needed safety improvements.”

Although Kuplic said he is “absolutely elated” about how the room looks after the renovation, he also is excited about how the upgrades have improved the room’s acoustics.

“It always had a nice acoustic, but now it’s very live,” he said. “Removing the old particleboard risers had an enormous effect on the acoustics of the room. Students don’t have to work hard at all now to hear their sound.”

Holwerda said that in order to see projects like these come to completion, it takes an entire village.

“I really appreciate the time and work of facilities, faculty and administration in making the improvements to the Fine Arts vocal music room happen,” she said. “It’s amazing the impact fresh paint and new furniture can have on faculty morale and students’ attitudes toward learning!” ■

Transfer Student Part of Winning Engineering Team

by Lance Ziesch

Jose Rodriguez, a transfer student from Dodge City Community College (DC3), is a current member of the Kansas State University (K-State) competitive engineering team, which won first place at the 10th annual Collegiate Wind Competition (CWC), May 15-19, in Boulder, Colo.

Having completed his fifth semester in the K-State engineering program, and his first semester as a member of the college's engineering team, which is called Wildcat Wind Power (WWP), Rodriguez said he will serve as the team secretary for the 2023-2024 year.

"WWP is a multidisciplinary engineering design team that competes annually in the Collegiate Wind Competition hosted by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory," he said. "The competition challenges our team to develop unique solutions to a complex set of wind energy projects, including the design of a small-scale wind turbine, the design of a utility-scale wind farm, and wind-related outreach in our local community."

The competition, which helps prepare future members of the wind energy workforce through real-world technology, project development, and outreach experience, culminated in a week-long final event at the University of Colorado Boulder's Balch Fieldhouse. There, the 13 finalist teams tested their wind turbine prototypes and presented their work to panels of wind energy experts.

Acting Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Alejandro Moreno, said the yearly competition helps students gain hands-on experience and builds professional relationships that will help them join the nation's wind energy workforce.

"Wind energy is already one of the fastest growing industries in the country, but we need many more workers for us to achieve our goals of a 100% clean electricity by 2035 and a net-zero-emissions economy by 2050," Moreno said. "I congratulate the 2023 winning teams, and I look forward to seeing what these students do next in this space."

Regarding the future, Rodriguez said he is planning on another two years at K-State, before he graduates in May 2025 with a degree in mechanical engineering and minors in personal financial planning and leadership studies.

"I have not fully decided what specific path I want to follow in my career, but I still have a couple years to decide," he said.

Originally from Ponce, Puerto Rico, Rodriguez relocated to Dodge City in 2011. After graduating from Dodge City High School (DCHS) in 2017, he decided to continue his education at DC3. Serving as a student-athlete on the college's 2018 and 2019 track and field teams, he graduated in May 2019, with an Associate of Science degree.

As a first-generation college student at DC3, he utilized available campus resources such as TRIO Student Support Services, which is designed to help first-generation, low-income or disabled college students succeed in their college endeavors. And he made use of the tutoring services available at the Student Achievement and Resources Center (SARC).

"DC3 offered me affordable, high-quality education that prepared me for K-State after graduating," Rodriguez said. "The SARC, Science & Math Department, and TRIO worked endlessly to provide me with all the resources I needed to continue my education. Both coaches and professors became mentors in school and in life."

In addition to the people who helped him succeed at DC3, he said he also is grateful for the many others who have supported him along the way.

"I want to first thank my parents Joan Millan and Francisco Rivera for their continuous support throughout my journey and for giving me everything, when they had nothing," Rodriguez said.

"I would also like to recognize the long hours of hard work my WWP team put toward designing and creating a national award-winning project. I would not have been here without them," he said.

"Lastly, I would like to encourage first-generation students and underrepresented minority students to continue to break barriers in their families and communities," he said. "The sky is the limit." ■

Former DC3 student, Jose Rodriguez, of Dodge City, is now a fifth-semester engineering student at K-State. In addition, he is a member of the K-State engineering team, Wildcat Wind Power, which won First Place Overall at the 2023 Collegiate Wind Competition, in Boulder, Colo.

COURTESY OF JOSE RODRIGUEZ



Graduate Named Residence Life Supervisor

by Lance Ziesch

Recent Dodge City Community College (DC3) graduate, Lindsey Crowell, took over as the college's Residence Life Supervisor on June 1.

Crowell, who is originally from Pueblo, Colo., graduated in May from DC3 with an Associate of Arts degree.

"It has been very interesting to see everything that goes on behind the scenes to make everything run smoothly," she said. "I look forward to meeting all of the new students and can't wait to see what this exciting year will bring."

As a student, Crowell said her favorite parts of her DC3 experience were being a part of the track and field team and being an on-campus resident assistant (RA).

"Being a part of the track team allowed me to make countless fun memories of going to practice and meets with my friends," she said. "And being an RA allowed me to put on events and make the dorms a fun and welcoming place for other students."

As a result of serving as an RA, Crowell said she got to see what it would be like to work with the college's Residence Life staff. And due to this positive experience, when she heard about the open position, she decided to apply.



LAKIN SCHECK

Lindsey Crowell

"I felt that I would be good fit," she said, referring to the Residence Life Supervisor position. "In February of this year, I talked with Dr. Jay Kinzer, Lewis Mize, and Tracy Shaw, and I told them I was considering applying for the job. They were all very excited. So, I submitted an application for the job in March, and I got called for an interview in April."

Lewis Mize, DC3 Director of Residence Life/Judicial Affairs, said it has been great

seeing Crowell make the transition from student to staff.

"Her having been a recent student, not to mention a student-athlete and RA, gives her a unique insight that is highly beneficial to our other staff members," he said. "The students will have someone who literally went through what they are going through. She is excited to be an advocate for the students in this new capacity, and I feel her positive energy and outlook pushes us even more as well."

Mize said that when Residence Life staff began interviewing students for 2023-2024 RA positions, several of the candidates stated that Crowell was an example of the kind of RA they wanted to be, because she had helped them so much.

"She was an outstanding resident assistant with clear leadership abilities, and she has continued that trend as a professional staff member," he said. "Lindsey has the skills and abilities to be a positive asset to not only Residence Life, but Dodge City Community College as a whole. If higher education is where she wants to be, she has a chance to go far within it and make a huge impact on students along the way." ■

State Report Shows Increase in DC3 Enrollment

by Lance Ziesch

Preliminary fall census day figures released by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) on Sept. 27 show that Dodge City Community College (DC3) is the only community college in the state that has posted both 1-year and 5-year gains for headcount enrollment.

For fall 2023, DC3's student headcount was 1,737, which represents a 2.4% increase over the previous fall and a 12.6% increase compared to five years ago.

"I am extremely proud of our enrollment figures," DC3 President, Dr. Harold Nolte, said. "These results are not by accident, but by hard work. Our administration, faculty and staff go the extra mile day in and day out to get the word out about Dodge City Community



College. I often say that our job is simply to recruit, to retain, to educate, and to graduate. These increases in enrollment are proof that we are on the right track."

According to the KBOR report, the state's public higher education system has experienced a 2% overall increase in enrollment as of the 20th-day fall census compared to the prior year. This increase, which is across the system, reflects that the public university, community college and technical college sectors are all seeing growth in enrollment.

"We are encouraged to see enrollment growth across our system this year," KBOR President and CEO Blake Flanders, said. "With initiatives such as increased student

financial aid, a common general education package, and growing opportunities for students to participate in applied learning and internships, our system has made important strides to increase affordability, access, and success and begun to reverse a long trend of declining enrollment. We look forward to continuing this work and serving Kansas families and businesses."

In addition to DC3's positive data from KBOR, Research.com, which is a platform in the field of academic research and education, released its Best Colleges in America 2023 Report on Oct. 2. In this report, DC3 was ranked No. 2 in the Best Value College in Kansas category and was recognized with the Best Value College in Kansas and Best Value College in the Midwest awards. ■



The new Conq Care Cabinet in the DC3 Library.

Conq Care Cabinet Program Expands

by Lance Ziesch

As of the fall 2023 semester, Dodge City Community College (DC3) has doubled the number of locations for its Conq Care Cabinet program.

Designed to hold various nonperishable foods, hygiene items, and school supplies for DC3 students in need, the initial two Conq Care Cabinets were located in the first-floor lobby of the Student Union and the second-floor hallway of the Humanities Building, when the program began in March 2022.

However, in summer 2023, the cabinet located in Humanities was moved to the Student Achievement and Resources Center (SARC) in the Science & Math Building. And at the beginning of this semester, two new cabinets—one on the first floor of Humanities and one in the DC3 Library—were added, doubling the size of the project.

“The Library was chosen because they have a very caring staff and later hours than some of the other locations,” Jay Gooldy, DC3 Instructor of English and program initiator, said. “They were already providing a few items for students in need, so it seemed like a natural fit.”

Since the cabinet’s arrival on Aug. 28, Holly Mercer, DC3 Library Director, said there has been an “incredibly positive” response from students.

“Within just the first hour of installation, we observed students actively using the cabinet to access the available options,” she said. “This immediate uptake suggests the cabinet fulfills a very real and significant need among our student community.”

Bringing this type of program to the DC3 campus is another example of the college’s overall commitment to student success, she said.

“Attending college can undeniably present financial challenges, especially when it comes to covering essential needs such as food and hygiene supplies,” she said. “By providing these Conq Care Cabinets, the hope is to alleviate some of

the financial burden, allowing students to allocate their often limited funds more toward their educational needs.”

In addition to the new cabinets, Gooldy said there also will be new groups coming alongside DC3’s Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) students to help stock them.

“PTK is still in charge of the Humanities cabinet,” he said. “It was moved to the first floor so that it would be easier for them to access with their food cart. But the SARC, Student Services, and the Library will all fill their own.”

Like the original Conq Care Cabinets, the new ones added this semester were custom made by Kitchens Inc. of Dodge City, Gooldy said.

“DC3 couldn’t ask for a better partner for an endeavor like this than Kitchens Inc. Scott Bogner and his staff are always willing to help,” he said. “One thing that people may not realize is that these are really high-quality cabinets designed specifically for our needs. Kitchens Inc. has made a significant investment in the wellbeing of our student body of Dodge City Community College, and we are a better campus for it. The cabinet construction is first class and will ensure that they will last for years to come.”

The Conq Care Cabinet program, which he said began as a service-learning project in one of his summer 2021 preparatory composition classes, has already “eclipsed any expectations” he and his students originally had.

“The students who I worked with still talk about the service-learning process, and our current students take full advantage of our resources,” he said. “Faculty and staff have been a godsend in filling the cabinets. Not only do they participate in the donation competitions that we have, but I also catch them adding items when they think nobody is looking. The success of the project is really a testament to the character of our faculty and staff.” ■

DC3 Nursing Program Ranked No. 1 in Kansas

by Lance Ziesch

On Oct. 12, the Dodge City Community College (DC3) nursing program was ranked No. 1 by PracticalNursing.org for its Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program. Out of the 19 Kansas nursing schools listed in the report, DC3 received an overall score of 100% and was named the 2024 Top Ranked LPN Program.

According to PracticalNursing.org, the individual rankings were determined after “careful review” of a school’s first-time pass rates over the past several years for the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN).

For three of the past four years—2023, 2022 and 2020—DC3’s NCLEX-PN exam first-time pass rate has been 100%.

“This award is so important to our program!” Dr. Mechele Hailey, DC3 Dean of Nursing and Allied Health, said. “We work really hard to provide a quality education for our students with standards that benefit our communities, and we are proud of the hard work of our faculty, staff and students.”

Rounding out the Top 5 nursing programs in Kansas, second through fifth places respectively, are North Central Kansas Technical College at 98.87%, Barton Community College at 98.52%, Neosho County Community College at 95.13%, and Garden City Community College at 94.21%. ■





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CHRISTINA HASELHORST

After receiving their diplomas on May 13, members of Dodge City Community College's 87th graduating class turn their tassels.

DC3 Celebrates Its 87th Graduating Class

by Lance Ziesch

The Dodge City Community College (DC3) graduation weekend began with a reception for the 2023 Distinguished Alumnus, **Sherry Curtis Rogers**, on Friday, May 12, in the DC3 Library.

That evening, the college hosted its third-annual Honors Banquet at the Boot Hill Casino and Resort Conference Center, which featured remarks from Rogers and a special recognition ceremony for the college's High Honors and Honors graduates.

On Saturday, May 13, the college hosted its annual graduation

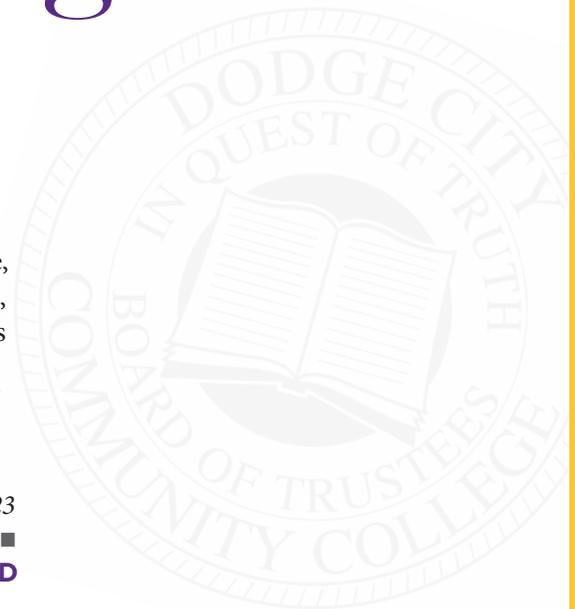
ceremonies at the DC3 Student Activity Center. Up first was the Nursing Pinning Ceremony, which was followed by Commencement.

At Commencement, students wore purple gowns for the first time, instead of the traditional black ones, and Rogers gave a second address as Distinguished Alumnus.

In addition, **Addison Spencer**, of Vernon, Texas, gave the invocation and the student leader remarks.

For more information about the 2023 Distinguished Alumnus, see Page 19. ■

- CONTINUED





Above, members of the Air Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (Air Force JROTC) Color Guard at Dodge City High School present the flag at the 2023 graduation ceremony.



Student Government Association (SGA) President, Addison Spencer, a sophomore from Vernon, Texas, gave the invocation and student leader remarks at the commencement ceremony.



DC3 students Parker Holuska, sophomore, Dodge City; Trevor Albert, sophomore, Minneola; Allison Haselhorst, sophomore, Dodge City; Natalie Ortiz, sophomore, Pasadena, Texas; Moses Aguilar, sophomore, Dodge City; and Alieyah Pauly, sophomore, Leander, Texas; perform the college alma mater, "Hail the Purple and Gold."



Band Director, Joel Vinson (front left), leads the DC3 Band as they play "God of Our Fathers" by Claude T. Smith.



LAKIN SCHECK

Members of Dodge City Community College's 87th graduating class wait to receive their diplomas on May 13, in the DC3 Student Activity Center.



CHRISTINA HASELHORST

After receiving their pins, nursing students await the recessional lineup at the 2023 Nursing Pinning ceremony.



CHRISTINA HASELHORST



LARIN SCHECK



CHRISTINA HASELHORST



LANCE ZIESCH



CHRISTINA HASELHORST

The Board of Trustees pause for a photo with the college president prior to the commencement exercises. Pictured (left to right) are Jammie Phillips, D.C.; Kelly Henrichs, D.D.S.; Kathy Ramsour, Vice-Chair; Dr. Harold Nolte, President; Gary Harshberger, Chair; Jim Lewis; Sheila Bertelsen; and Bill Turley.

Rogers Named Distinguished Alumnus

by Lance Ziesch

Sherry (Holden) Curtis Rogers, a Professor of Physical Science at Dodge City Community College (DC3), served as the college's 62nd Distinguished Alumnus for the May 2023 graduation weekend activities.

Born and raised in rural Southwest Kansas, Rogers graduated from Bucklin High School in 1988. After attending classes at DC3, she later transferred to Kansas State University, where she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 1993.

From 1993-1995, Rogers served as a research chemist at EIC Laboratories, in Norwood, Mass. In 2001, she returned to DC3 as an adjunct instructor, and she would remain there for the next five years.

"I left the college and started teaching at Dodge City High School in January of 2006," she said. "I taught high school physics, chemistry, and physical science for eight years before coming back to Dodge City Community College."

In 2014, Rogers completed her Master's degree at Fort Hays State University (FHSU), and later that same year, she returned to DC3 to become the college's physical sciences professor. Continuing in that capacity today, she teaches Physical Science, Astronomy, and Meteorology classes.

"DC3 is a special place, and I wouldn't be here if it wasn't," she said. "It was hard for me to leave DCHS and come back here, as I had it pretty good at the high school. But, I have a very strong emotional connection to DC3. It is a part of who I am as a person, and it is where I belong."

Currently, Rogers lives on a farm about eight miles north of Spearville, Kan., in Hodgeman County, with her husband, Chad, who farms and ranches.

She has two children. Her 27-year-old daughter, Amber Curtis, graduated from FHSU with a Bachelor's in Chemistry and Physics in 2016, and she is now working in Missouri as a chemist. And her 25-year-old son, Jac Curtis, is currently in the Air Force, and he is stationed at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, in Hawaii.

Rogers said that her goal for her students each semester is to have the same kind of DC3 experience she had as a student. And, ultimately, she hopes they learn more than just content from her classes.

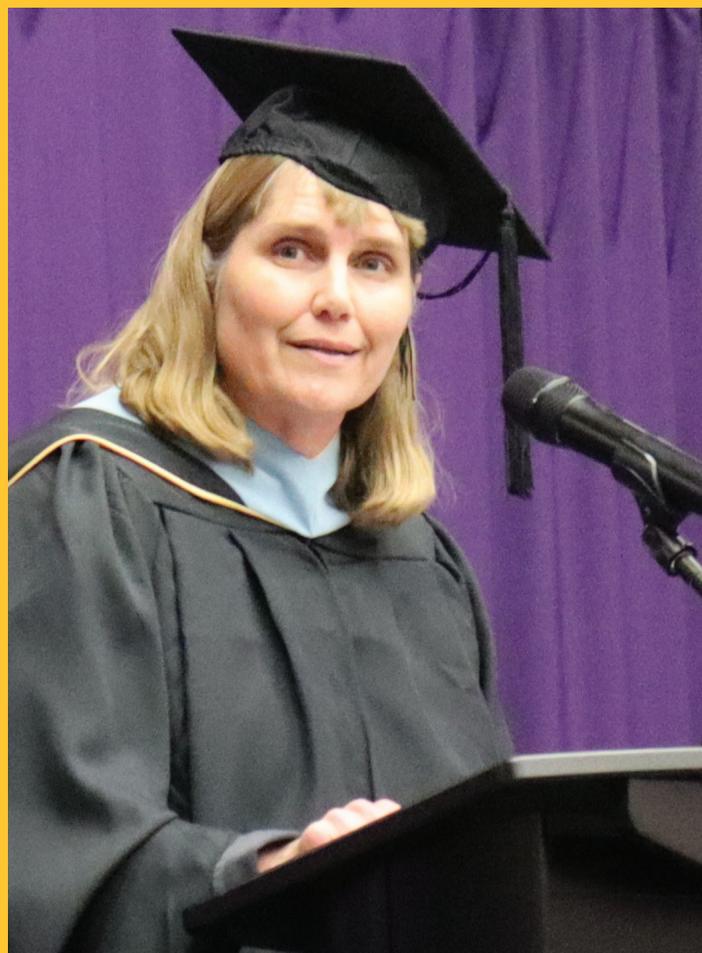
"Honestly, I want them to remember their time here the same way I do," she said. "Amazing professors and lifelong friendships."

In addition, she said she hopes her students will remember her as the person who loved being in the classroom with them every day.

"I want to be, by far and away, the best teacher they ever had," she said. "But, I will settle for being a good teacher who made a difference in their lives."

Last year, Rogers was selected as one of 24 teachers, from 13 states, to serve as one of the 2022 NASA Airborne Astronomy Ambassadors (AAA). Through this program, she received training in astrophysics and planetary science, and she attended a weeklong STEM immersion experience at NASA's Infrared Telescope Facility (IRTF) on Mauna Kea, in Hawaii.

And although being named as an astronomy ambassador is a cherished title that she gets to keep for the remainder of her career, she said the "accolades" she receives from her students are the most precious awards she receives.



Sherry Curtis Rogers, a Professor of Physical Science at DC3, addresses the graduating class on May 13 as the 2023 Distinguished Alumnus. Rogers is the 62nd alumnus to be recognized by the program since it began in 1963.

"I get hundreds of accolades every year," she said. "They come in the form of kind student comments written on final exams at the end of the semester, Christmas cards, astronomy trinkets and gifts from students—who saw them and thought of me—and letters from boot camp from former students who joined the military after leaving here. Those are the only accolades that matter."

Regarding the future, Rogers said she will continue to work on various educational projects.

"You never really get good at this teaching thing," she said. "I am always trying to make it better. I love what I do, and I cannot imagine doing anything else. Teaching is my passion, and I love spending my days with my students!"

Rogers is the 62nd Distinguished Alumnus to be recognized by the college since the program was implemented in 1963, and she said she is "honored and humbled" about the nomination.

"I went to school with a lot of people who are way more distinguished and successful than I am," she said. "But nobody loves what they do as much as I do. First, I actually get paid to talk about what I love all day long. Second, I get to make a difference. I once sat where my students sit. I had some pretty amazing professors who had a profound impact on who I am today, and this is my way of repaying my debts." ■

LANCE ZIESCH



After 38 years at DC3—and 32 years as head softball coach—Robert “Howie” Smith is stepping down.

Coach Smith Has Left the Field

by Lance Ziesch

After 38 years at Dodge City Community College (DC3), Robert “Howie” Smith is saying goodbye.

Smith, the college’s head softball coach from 1991-2023, began his tenure at DC3 in 1985 as a part-time assistant coach under then head coach Dr. Dale “Doc” Munson, who was a longtime local Dodge City chiropractor.

After graduating from Hoisington High School in 1976, Smith attended Barton County Community College, in Great Bend, Kan., for two years, graduating in 1978. From there, he went on to Bethany College, in Lindsborg, Kan., for three years, graduating in 1981. And while at Bethany, as a graduate assistant, Smith got his first taste of college coaching, helping out with the football and softball teams.

Following his time at Bethany, Smith returned to his hometown of Hoisington, Kan., in the summer of 1981 and got a couple of local jobs in the community.

“So, at 6 a.m., I drove a school bus in the morning, and picked up kids in the country,” he said. “Then, I went to the

grocery store across the street and worked there till 3.”

After that, Smith headed to Hoisington High School where he was considered a Rule 10 coach, which means he was not yet certified to teach by the state, but he was eligible to coach because he had completed a Fundamentals of Coaching course.

“I was the offensive coordinator for the high school football team, and I was the assistant wrestling coach,” he said.

In addition to his other jobs, Smith volunteered with the local fire department and also began to competitively bowl with four other guys.

“I was an EMT/ambulance driver, so we were on 12-hour shifts,” he said. “I would take the 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. shift, and I’d have my pager next to my bed. And I got to the point I’m bowling three nights a week or traveling every weekend throughout the country bowling.”

However, along with the bowling, Smith began to drink heavily.

“I kind of became an alcoholic you know,” he said. “We drank every night

bowling, and that’s what we did in Hoisington, too.”

However, by 1984 Smith started questioning his current lifestyle. And one day while working at the grocery store, he would have a conversation that would ultimately change the course of his life.

“We had sales reps at that time coming to the store,” he said. “So the guy that did Keebler cookies was our sales rep out of Great Bend, and he said they couldn’t keep anybody out here in Dodge more than six months, because nobody wanted to move out here and stay out here.”

After discussing the subject with the Keebler representative, Smith said he thought the Dodge City position sounded like a “pretty cush job.” Of course his opinion later changed when he realized he would have to sell a quota of products to keep his paychecks steady.

“So for about a week, I thought, ‘Do I want to stay in Hoisington and be an alcoholic, or do I want to take this fork in the road and do something different?’” he said.

After thinking it over, Smith took the position with Keebler and headed to Dodge. And one of the first things he did was look up Munson, who was someone he had become acquainted with through summer softball—and also the only person he knew in town.

“Doc’s team and my team were going to the same tournaments, and so many times we seemed to always be in the finals,” he said. “We had great respect for each other’s coaching style and teams.”

So, during that first visit, Munson asked him if he would be interested in coaching softball alongside him at DC3.

“He said, ‘Hey, you want to work for \$1,000 a year?’ And I’m like, ‘Heck, yeah,’” he said.

And so, Smith began his career at DC3. At first, he shared an office with Head Basketball Coach Casey Malik, which worked out well, as Malik used the office mostly during the day, and Smith used it mostly during the night.

“I would go in there at night and make recruit calls and stuff like that, the old-fashioned way,” he said. “You’d get on the phone, and you’d spend two or three hours up there.”

After Munson resigned in 1991, DC3 Athletic Director Merle “Bones” Nay offered him the head coaching position for \$19,000 a year, and as they say, the rest is history.

“It was a no-brainer for me,” he said. “I knew I always wanted to coach, but I thought it would be football to be truthful. I thought I’d be in the NFL by now being an offensive coordinator, but I found out that there was a lot more to coaching football than what I thought, and softball seemed to be my niche. When Bones offered me the opportunity, I jumped at it. And that’s where it went from there till now.”

Of course, Smith said a lot has changed since he started at the college.

“I believe at that time, there were only four of us teams that were in the conference on this side of the state,” he said. “The East still had seven or eight, but then over here there were only four.”

In addition to less teams, the softball seasons were also shorter back then, Smith said. Instead of starting the softball season in early February, like they did this past year, they used to start their season after spring break.

“You know, if we got 30 games in, we were doing well,” he said. “Now if we don’t get 50 to 55 in, it has been a down year for us.”

Another noticeable change about the DC3 softball program through the decades is the upgrades to facilities. The college’s

baseball and softball teams used to both practice on campus, he said, instead of Cavalier Field and Legends Park, respectively.

“We had one batting cage out there that kind of split the fields, and then we had a tin storage box,” he said. “We’d throw all our equipment in there and put a lock on it, and baseball would be hitting baseballs out on 14th Avenue at that time.”

Little did Smith know, but once he stepped on the DC3 campus, he would coach here for the rest of his career. This meant he would have the opportunity to work with nine college presidents and nine athletic directors, a number which ultimately would include himself, as he served as the college’s athletic director from 2005-2011.

“I think each young coach thinks, ‘Okay, I’ll be here three, four years and hopefully have a lot of success and get to the DII level or maybe an assistant at a DI.’ There was no way I thought I would ever be out here this long.”

However, he would stay the course and choose not to pursue those Division I and II goals. And a large part of the reason was because Smith found something more important in Dodge City: family. Here, he would get married and divorced, and he also would become a father.

During his career, Smith said he has had three opportunities to leave DC3. However, each time he chose to stay to be near his daughter Chantel.

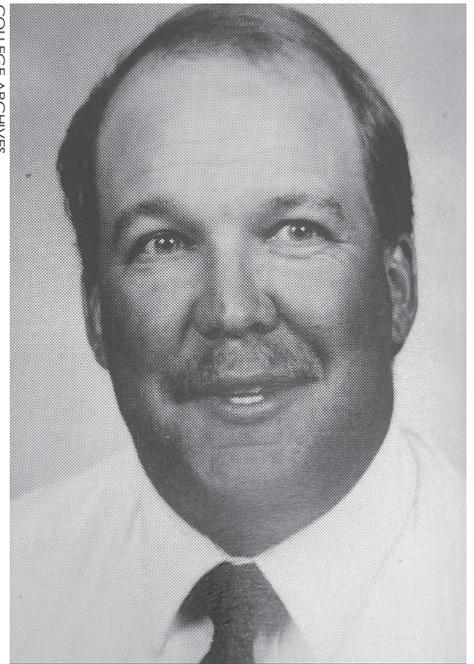
“My daughter was more important,” he said. “And being a single dad, I did not want to leave her to go to North Carolina to Mars Hill or some other places that offered me head coaching positions. You know, I think, knock on wood, my record here at Dodge is pretty clean. I mean, I’ve been a team player the whole time I’ve been here, and the school has been really, really good to me and Chantel and my ex-wife Terri.”

Of course, an essential part of the Howie Smith story is how he came to “that fork in the road” as he puts it, regarding his misuse of alcohol. Knowing it was a problem since 1984, he decided to finally settle the issue once and for all when he became head coach.

“I haven’t had a drink since July 4, 1991,” he said. “I went cold turkey. Three days on the job [as head coach], I drove back from Denver to Dodge on a recruiting trip. I walked in the door at my house, and my [now] ex-wife goes, ‘What are you doing home?’ I said, ‘I don’t know. I don’t know how I got home.’”

So, Smith told his wife that he was going downstairs to sleep it off. He knew

COLLEGE ARCHIVES



Smith as pictured in the 1991 “Golden Shield” yearbook.

he was at a crossroads, and he knew he had to decide whether he wanted to be an alcoholic or a professional softball coach and an ambassador for the game of softball.

“The next morning, I got up and told her I’m done,” he said. “Throw all the beer out. You’ll never see me have another drink. This July 4 marks 32 years since I took a drink.”

Smith credits “the good Lord” for the divine wakeup call that saved his life that July 4. And each season he shares the story with his players, hammering home the point that life is what a person makes it. And actions have consequences, both good and bad.

“I tell them, ‘Ladies, I made a mistake,’” he said. “I got very lucky. I could have killed somebody. I could have been killed. And I wouldn’t have my daughter. So again, I’m just telling you, think about it,” referring to how a split-second decision can alter the course of a person’s life.

“Yes. I’ve made some mistakes in my life, and God forbid I could be dead,” he said. “I could have killed somebody. I could be in jail. And I say again, I came to the fork. Do I want to keep drinking or do I want to coach? I got this job, and this has been my dream. And I’m just proud my daughter has never seen me take a drink.”

Smith said he loves to receive calls, emails or text messages from his former players, who contact him years later to say they now understand and appreciate what he was teaching them at DC3.

- CONTINUED



LAKIN SCHECK

After nearly 40 years at DC3, Coach Howie Smith is retiring. Above, Smith is pictured during a spring 2023 game.

COACH SMITH CONTINUED -

“They say, ‘Coach, it took me 15 years leaving Dodge, but now I understand what you were doing to prepare us.’ As I always said, ‘I’m not preparing you for the next two years of your life. I’m trying to prepare you for the next 15 or 20, when you have to go out there for that job interview. That’s why our shirts are tucked in at practice every day. I don’t allow you to pull your sleeves up. You’re going to look the part, look people in the eyes, and all that stuff.’”

And Smith said he is immensely proud of his players, whether they continue their softball careers after DC3 or not, as many of them choose not to compete when they transfer.

“Probably 99% of my kids still go on and finish that bachelor’s degree,” he said. “And I’m more proud of that than I am of anything, because they’re not quitting just after they got their associate degrees.”

As he settles into retirement, Smith said he will be moving to Wichita, Kan., to be closer to his daughter Chantel, her husband, and her two children. However, he said he anticipates he will continue coaching softball in some capacity.

“My dream would be to work for the Wichita Wind Surge, Wichita Thunder or just stay active in some type of sport,” he said. “I still want to teach the game of softball. I’ve always told myself, I hate the word coach. I call it teaching the game of softball, because I am teaching basic life skills to my players.”

Another reason for the move is Smith had some significant health

problems this past spring, which caused the self-proclaimed “lone wolf” to miss 10 games.

“Where I’d only missed one game in 36 years before, I missed 10 games after spring break,” he said. “So, again, I felt like that was another message from the good Lord saying, it’s time for you to get to Wichita—where if you really have a drastic heart attack or something—your daughter is right there and not 2 ½ hours away. Here, I could die in my home and nobody would know for a week because nobody has a key to my house.”

As Smith prepares to leave Dodge City and DC3, he said he will miss the friendships he has developed on campus most of all.

“You know, I hope people here on campus know I tried to give everything I could, to the best of my ability,” he said. “Sometimes in coaching, we weren’t very good at times. But it wasn’t because we didn’t try.”

After all these years, Smith said he now considers Dodge City as his hometown, and he doesn’t expect that to change.

“People will ask, ‘Hey, were you born in Dodge?’ he said. “I say, ‘Nope, an hour-and-a-half away, and I came out here on a whim.’ But, I think it worked out for everybody.” ■

Editor’s Note: *Howie Smith officially retired from DC3 on May 31, 2023, and he relocated to Wichita on Aug. 13, 2023. Currently, he is volunteering as an assistant softball coach at Newman University.*

Thank You, Howie

by Mike Smith

During Howie Smith’s tenure at Dodge City Community College (DC3), he has worked primarily as the head softball coach. However, he also has been a team player serving in many other roles, from athletic director to sports information director, to assistant softball coach, assistant women’s basketball coach, and more.

On the softball field, Smith amassed 749 victories for the Conquistadors, which includes three Kansas Jayhawk Community College Conference (KJCCC) conference championships, two Region VI Championships, and one West Sub-Regional Championship.

He also has four KJCCC runner-up finishes, two Region VI runner-up finishes, and two trips to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Softball World Series, which includes a fourth-place finish in 2000. And he coached 90-plus KJCCC All-Conference honorees, more than 40 Academic All-Americans, and eight All-Americans.

“Howie retiring is truly the end of an era for Dodge City softball as well as Jayhawk Conference softball,” Jacob Ripple, DC3 Athletic Director, said. “He has seen so many coaches and programs come and go that his knowledge of the Jayhawk Conference and NJCAA softball is just unmatched.

“Being a Dodge City native I can remember so many phases of DC3 softball, from practicing in the field on the front of campus, to playing at Wright Park and Thurow Park, to opening Legends Park, and eventually turfing those fields. Howie has been here through all of that.

“In addition to all the work he has done as the softball coach, he has also been a constant person to lean on if something else needed to be done, didn’t matter what it was, he was always willing to lend a helping hand.

“I will personally miss his historical knowledge of Conquistador athletics. He is the one person that I can go ask a question about someone who played at DC3 years ago, and he will usually have an answer for me. Howie will definitely be missed in our department.”

Smith has been recognized on the conference and national level several times during his career, including winning the KJCCC Coach of the Year four times.

He has also served as the KJCCC softball coaches association president and served as the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) West Region Director for the All-American and Coaching Staff of the Year committees, in addition to serving as the chairman for the NFCA Lead-off Classic for 12 years.

In 2014, he was selected as an assistant coach for the NJCAA All-Star team that competed in the Canadian Open International Tournament. Then, in 2015, he was named the head coach, and the team placed fifth in the tournament, which is still the highest finish ever for the NJCAA All-Star team.

In addition, Smith was inducted into the DC3 Athletic Hall of Fame in 2016. ■



COURTESY OF FLASH - LA COURNEUVE



ON THE FIELD

COLLEGE ARCHIVES

Former Conq Playing Football in France

by Mike Smith

The chance to play at the professional level of a sport is something every athlete dreams about, but turning that dream into a reality is not easy and takes plenty of hard work and dedication. And that opportunity doesn't always come the way a person pictures it playing out.

For former Dodge City Community College (DC3) Conquistador football player, Brandon Penerton (2017-2018) the dream of playing professional football has come outside of the United States in Europe. Penerton found a home with the Flash - La Courneuve in France, a team that plays in the Ligue Élite de Football American, which is a top-level American football league in France.

The defensive lineman from Homestead, Fla., carved out a niche for himself with the Flash, making plays along the defensive line earning himself Defensive MVP team honors in multiple games. The Flash beat Molosses -Asnières-sur-seine 27-9 in Penerton's debut, a game in which he had four tackles, three assists, and four sacks. He followed that up with five tackles and four tackles for loss in a 22-6 win over the Cougars - Saint-Ouen

the Alms. The Flash finished the season 8-1-1 winning the Central European Football League beating Thonon Black Panthers 26-21 in the CEFL Bowl XVII.

The former juco product says his time at Dodge City and playing at the juco level helped him not only achieve his dream of playing professionally but also changed his outlook on life.

"Juco really changed my perspective and outlook on life because not too many people make it out. My biggest lesson though had to be learning gratitude and patience. You should be grateful for anything that God allows to be put in your path good or bad because it all works together for your good in the end. I say patience because for a period of my life, I was working a 9-5 job, but now I'm overseas playing professional football in Europe. Playing at Dodge City really made me put my head down and just really work, and not give up, because you may just be that close to an opportunity without even knowing it," Penerton said.

Penerton came to Dodge City from Florida and played for the Conquistadors two seasons in 2017 and 2018. As a

freshman, he tallied 25 tackles on the defensive line with one sack and a forced fumble. While in 2018 as a sophomore, he played in 11 games recording 47 tackles, one sack, one interception, one forced fumble, one fumble recovery, and five pass breakups.

He went on to finish his collegiate playing career at West Florida, where he was part of the Argonauts National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II 2019 National Championship team playing in 14 games recording 21 tackles with two tackles for loss, a sack, and two quarterback hurries on a team that finished 13-2.

After not playing in 2020 due to COVID canceling the season, he suited up for the Argos again in 2021 playing in 11 games recording 24 tackles with three tackles for loss, and two sacks helping the team go 9-2.

"First, I have to give all glory to God for blessing with me the opportunity to go to Dodge City Community College, because it was a pivotal time in my life. Also, a big thanks to Coach Thomas and his coaching staff at the time for teaching me what hard work and determination looked

like. Dodge City was needed in my journey because it made me cherish every opportunity leading up to this point in my life," Penerton said.

The former Conq knows this opportunity is one to enjoy and make the best of as he helps the Flash vie for another title in the Ligue Elite de Football American, as they look to add to their 12 league titles in program history. Penerton said he learned plenty from his journey and experience at the juco level and has advice for others who have big dreams.

"Humility, honestly, because just as we get things and different opportunities, they can be snatched right away from us. Never be arrogant to the point you reframe from learning and growing. Always remain coachable, you can learn from all your coaches and add different tools to advance your game," he said.

"To everyone out there who has a dream, keep God first and never let opinions affect the road you're on, because everyone's path is not the same. And just because yours don't look like theirs doesn't mean you both can't end up in the same place. Keep the faith and never doubt what God can do," Penerton said. ■



Conquistador Fall Homecoming in Pictures



CHRISTINA HASELHORST

Paris Santacaterina, sophomore, Mackay, Australia; Parris Atkins, sophomore, Little Rock, Ark.; and Kyriana Jones, sophomore, Little Rock, Ark.; pause for a photo at the bonfire.



CHRISTINA HASELHORST

This year, the Homecoming bonfire took place on the sand volleyball pit behind Jackson Hall, on the evening of Sept. 29.



CHRISTINA HASELHORST

In addition to the bonfire and pep rally on Sept. 29, students and staff also enjoyed various onsite games. Above, (left to right) Thaddeus Turner, Assistant Football Coach-Defensive Coordinator; Logan Gareis, sophomore, Eden Prairie, Minn.; and Ricardo McCoy, Assistant Football Coach; play cornhole.



CHRISTINA HASELHORST

Members of the DC3 Pep Band perform during the bonfire and pep rally on Sept. 29.



CHRISTINA HASELHORST

As in past years, the pep rally at the bonfire site was led by the DC3 cheerleaders.



LANCE ZIESCH

Members of the DC3 cheer team pose for a quick photo during the Homecoming game on Sept. 30.



CHRISTINA HASSELHORST

For the first time since 2015, the Conq football team claimed victory against Garden City, defeating the Broncbusters 33-10.



LANCE ZIESCH

Zebastian Mata, sophomore, Dodge City; holds flyer Emalea Warden, sophomore, Bucklin; during the Homecoming game. Also pictured are (left) MJ Foster, sophomore, Homewood, Ill.; and (right) Baylea Larson, sophomore, Colorado Springs, Colo.



LANCE ZIESCH

The Homecoming Week culminated with the football game versus Garden City Community College on Sept. 30, at Memorial Stadium. The 2023 King and Queen, who were crowned at halftime, are Stone Wilson, sophomore, Dodge City; and Paris Santacaterina, sophomore, Mackay, Australia.



LANCE ZIESCH

The 2023 Homecoming Court included (left to right) Jalen Smith, sophomore, Bronx, N.Y.; Sequoya McAdoo, freshman, Kansas City, Mo.; Stone Wilson, sophomore, Dodge City; Paris Santacaterina, sophomore, Mackay, Australia; Gabriela Elizalde, sophomore, Laredo, Texas; and Dante Reid, freshman, Harrisburg, Penn. Also pictured is Dr. Harold Nolte, DC3 President.



DODGE CITY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Foundation

GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Back, Looking Forward



Empowering the Future

Chances are, there's someone special at the heart of your DC3 connection: a classmate, professor, a coach, a friend, or a mentor.

By looking forward, your gifts honor these relationships while also ensuring the DC3 family community continues to thrive.

Double Your Donation!

Your tax-deductible donation will be matched 100% by a matching grant program in 2023!

- **What gifts count?** 2023 donations to this program must be general donations.
- **Where will the funds go?** All donations through this program will be deposited into an investment account and will remain there for twenty years. The grant program matches 100% of all donations up to \$100,000!

We are almost there! Send your donations by December 31st to:

- ***Online:*** <https://ourschool.support/DC3GivingTuesday2023>
- ***Mail:*** DCCC Foundation, 2501 N. 14th Ave., Dodge City, KS 67801
- ***Call for Information:*** 620-227-9171



From the Director's Desk



Giving Back and Looking Forward: Dreams and Why Giving Matters

Can gifts to the Dodge City Community College (DC3) Foundation really make a difference? You know that my answer is going to be a resounding, “YES!” Did you expect anything different from me? Gifts of all sizes play an essential role at the DC3 Foundation. But let me give you reasons from my perspective on how gifts really do make a difference. Not because I am the person asking for them, but because I am also a gift giver. And at the DC3 Foundation, we are in the dream business.

We see students chasing their dreams every day, and in these students, we often see ourselves. Some of us at the college had dreams of graduating from college or getting that dream job. Some were first-generation students who came from underrepresented backgrounds or low-income families. Some of us received donor-funded scholarships as well as government financial aid that helped us through. See? We had dreams, too. The DC3 Foundation wants to help students with these dreams.

Philanthropic support inspires others to give and creates a ripple effect. We call it the **#ConquerEffect**. Alumni giving is a vote of confidence. Community giving is a vote of confidence. Additional alumni and other donors want to know that they are investing in an institution that has the support of its community. It is what inspires me to give both to DC3 and to inspire the dreams of the future, just as I was inspired in my personal collegiate dreams.

But wait, I am not a financially wealthy person. Philanthropy at the DC3 Foundation is not defined by the gift or the size of the gift. What matters is the belief, commitment and the desire to be an active part of DC3's future. Your support impacts every corner of our campus from scholarships to academic programs to projects benefiting our students, faculty, staff, and community. Donors—alumni, parents, friends, corporations, students, faculty, and staff—are of all generations and passions but share a common bond in preserving the future of an ever-strong Dodge City Community College.

Monthly and annual gifts to the DC3 Foundation provide vital stability and flexibility to our organization. The majority of gifts to the DC3 Foundation are restricted, however. Funds given for a specific project, for example, cannot be used for scholarships, and funds given for scholarships cannot be used for events or office expenses. Monthly and annual gifts can be used to address the areas of greatest need or to meet unexpected expenses.

Every gift makes a difference! The majority of gifts made to the Foundation are under \$1,000, and most of our donors do not come from wealthy backgrounds. But together, they add up to scholarship aid, campus-project assistance, and programs through the Foundation that help the college to keep costs low for our students as much as possible. Every gift strengthens academic programs and improves campus facilities, services, and scholarship opportunities. And when a donor makes a gift that they really had to stretch to afford, it can be magical and inspiring for both the donor and to others.

Through generosity, doors of opportunity are opened to students from the widest possible range of backgrounds. In turn, each student brings to DC3 different passions and perspectives, talents, and life experiences. Such a varied and exciting learning environment benefits all students and ultimately makes DC3 itself stronger. The more scholarship funds the Foundation can provide, the less students have to rely on Federal student loans, and the stronger the college becomes.

So, join me in the business of dreams. We have opportunities for dream-making through 2023 end-of-year giving with our matching-grant program, a 60% State of Kansas tax credit opportunity, and our regular endowed scholarship giving opportunities. Not only do your gifts make a difference, gifts ARE the difference—the difference between zero opportunity and the opportunity of a lifetime and dreams to be shared.

#TogetherWeConquer

Christina Haselhorst
Director of Foundation & Community Relations

Building a Legacy, Strengthening a Community

by Christina Haselhorst

These generous donors gave to the DC3 Foundation from April 17, 2023, to Nov. 10, 2023. Totalling more than \$678,000 over that time period, including donations for scholarships, projects, Foundation general fund, the Purple with Purpose Campaign, annual golf tournament, purchases for the annual auction, DC3 employee donations, and memorials.

You, too, can make a difference and be a partner for student success with the DC3 Foundation. Contact Christina Haselhorst, DC3 Director of Foundation and Community Relations, to set up an appointment (foundation@dc3.edu). Your support allows the Dodge City Community College Foundation to grow and thrive each year.

Leave your legacy with us and strengthen a community. We are not just a community college... we are a college community. You are an integral member of that community! Thank you! ■

Several Anonymous Donors
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Ashland Community
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Ryan Ausmus
Drs. Roger and Karin Barnes
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Gala-ry of Ghouls!

A fun look back at the 2023 Foundation Gala and Auction masquerade



LAKINI SCHECK

Minerva McGonagal—Foundation and Community Relations Director, Christina Haselhorst, casts a spell over the crowd at the beginning of the Gala and Auction. This year, the theme was a masquerade, and the event had an incredible turnout with many patrons showing up in costumes.



TRACEY BARTON

Peter Pan and Wendy—Foundation Board Member Aaron Atzbach, and his wife Sarah, were one of several couples who wore costumes. Because of such a favorable reception, the Foundation is considering making the gala a masquerade every year.



LAKINI SCHECK

Ed Dewey volunteered as auctioneer for the live-auction portion of the 2023 Foundation Gala and Auction on Oct. 27.



TRACEY BARTON

Elphaba from “Wicked”—Board of Trustees Vice-Chair Kathy Ramsour, and husband Don, were on hand for the Oct. 27 event, which raised nearly \$50,000.



LANGEZIESCH

As in past years, the DC3 cheer team volunteered their time to make the gala a success. After the event, the team proved they didn't need ladders to take down decorations! Pictured (left to right, top) are flyer Lexi Hunt, sophomore, Colorado Springs, Colo.; flyer Teanna Beckham, sophomore, Parker, Colo.; (left to right, bottom) Brandon Billingsly, freshman, Colorado Springs, Colo.; and Ryan Larnar, sophomore, Colorado Springs, Colo.



TRACEY BARTON

Rodeo Clown and Barrel—Steve and Cherry Deges definitely cowboyed up for the gala! With such a positive response to the masquerade idea, the Foundation is excited and already working on next year's event!



DODGE CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Dodge City Community College
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Dodge City, KS 67801
www.dc3.edu

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Just One More

Special Delivery

The game ball for the Nov. 4 contest against Butler Community College was delivered courtesy of the DC3 helicopter program and Bennie Wiley-Bethea, Campus Counselor (left). Above, Jacob Ripple, Athletic Director, escorts Wiley-Bethea from the helicopter. (Also pictured is pilot Daniel Hernandez, Adjunct Flight Instructor.) The game, which was broadcast on ESPN+, resulted in a 31-10 win for the Conquistadors.

