

The Conquistador

Spring 2025

THE MAGAZINE OF DODGE CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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DC3 Celebrates Its 89th Graduating Class

THE CONQS
CELEBRATE
THEIR FIRST
REGION 6
CHAMPIONSHIP
ON MARCH 15.

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Women's Basketball Makes
First-Ever Final Four Appearance



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The Conquistador

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1
SPRING 2025

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*The Conquistador is published once per
semester by the Office of Marketing and
Public Relations.*

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DC3 BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL ENROLLMENT

1,515

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE

10

STUDENT-TO-FACULTY RATIO

11:1

STUDENTS FROM

37

STATES/TERRITORIES

31

COUNTRIES

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

17

STUDENT GENDER

53%

FEMALE

47%

MALE

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Hello, Conq Nation!



Welcome to the spring issue of the Conquistador magazine! As always, you will find positive, upbeat stories about the unconquerable spirit, enthusiasm, and culture of Dodge City Community College (DC3).

Like in past issues, this one includes stories about student achievements, excellence in athletics, and the contributions DC3 students are making in our community. It also includes lots and lots of pictures from annual events like Spring Fling, the Honors Banquet, Nursing Pinning, and Commencement.

Regarding athletics, we have had incredible success the past few months! Not only did our women's basketball team win their first Region 6 championship—and make their first-ever Final Four appearance—in March, but our cheer team also brought home another national championship in April! And that's just a few of the wonderful things our student-athletes have accomplished.

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.

Thanks for being a part of Conq Nation! Read on!

All the best,

Harold Nolte, Ed.D.

President

Cong Corral

Conqs on campus and around our community.



PAULINA DUENAS

The DC3 SGA officer team and Paulina Duenas, Student Activities Coordinator and SGA Advisor, attended the Kansas Student Government Conference at Fort Hays State University on Jan. 24-25. Pictured, left to right, are Whitley Cash, sophomore, Laverne Okla.; Kendal Ratzlaff, sophomore, Spearville Kan., Caylee May, sophomore, Amarillo, Texas; and Sarai Chavez, sophomore, Dumas, Texas.



LANCE ZIESCH

On Feb. 26, the college honored Women's Basketball Head Coach, Landon Steele (right), for his 100th career win at DC3, after the Conqs' 114-37 victory over Independence Community College. With the third highest wins in the program's history, Steele also has amassed 200 total career wins as a head coach. Presenting the award is Jacob Ripple, Athletic Director.



LANCE ZIESCH

On Jan. 25, the DC3 Rodeo Team displayed its skills at the Western State Bank Expo Center as part of the 2025 DC3 Rodeo Showcase. Also featuring student-athletes from Garden City Community College and Pratt Community College, the event included six timed events: barrel racing, goat tying, breakaway roping, team roping, tie-down roping, and steer wrestling. In addition, DC3 music student Zienna Kaiser, freshman, Loveland, Colo.; performed the national anthem for the audience, and rodeo athletes, Chestin Smith-Rohman, freshman, Bailey, Colo.; and Ainsley Carter, sophomore, Belen, N.M.; served as rodeo announcers. Hosted for the first time in conjunction with the Southwest Kansas Winter Expo, this was DC3's first rodeo showcase since 2019.



More than 120 people attended the third-annual DC3 Rodeo Live and Silent Auction, on Feb. 22, at the Boot Hill Museum Mariah Gallery. With proceeds from the event going toward the college's rodeo program, the night included remarks from DC3 President Dr. Harold Nolte; a home-style meal; a silent auction; a live auction conducted by Alex Phelps, of Ulysses, Kan.; and entertainment by singer Sam Unruh, of Canton, Kan. Pictured (left to right, first row) are Abigail Zabel, sophomore, Satanta, Kan.; Montana Heller, sophomore, Meriden, Kan.; Gracy Downare, freshman, Hartsel, Colo.; Ainsley Carter, sophomore, Belen, N.M.; Kimberly Baeza, freshman, Dodge City; Keeley Scott, freshman, Alex, Okla.; (second row) Jacob Perkey, Head Rodeo Coach; Cody Vance, freshman, Scott City, Kan.; Audrey Breen, sophomore, Minooka, Ill.; Jadea Graves, sophomore, Wheatland, Wyo.; Kooper Wright, freshman, Scott City, Kan.; Chestin Smith-Rohman, freshman, Bailey, Colo.; Kyle Cheney, sophomore, Powell, Wyo.; Damien Wood, sophomore, Bosque, N.M.; Levi Crain, sophomore, Channing, Texas; Trevor Taghon, sophomore, Rockford, Mich.; (third row) Dillon Gray, freshman, Victoria, Kan.; Cole Dennis, freshman, Sedalia, Colo.; Bryce Jackson, freshman, Rifle, Colo.; Jackson Guoan, sophomore, Tawas City, Mich.; Easton Rohr, freshman, Dodge City; Conner Nelson, freshman, Nora Springs, Iowa; Tavi Ford, freshman, Clinton, Okla.; and Jake Voss, sophomore, Concordia, Kan.



On March 11, Dodge City Community College (DC3) students met with representatives from various regional four-year colleges and universities at this semester's Spring Transfer Fair in the DC3 Library. Approximately 50 students attended the event to inquire about the transfer process, with 13 schools present from Kansas and Oklahoma.



On Feb. 26, DC3 presented two gift baskets to MJE Livestock Equipment LLC in appreciation of the company's \$50,000 donation to the DC3 Diesel Technology Program through the Kansas State Tax Credit Program for Capital Outlay and Equipment. Pictured, left to right, are Colby Kline, DC3 Professor of Diesel Technology; Dr. Harold Nolte, DC3 President; Heather Jantz, MJE Livestock Equipment Chief Operating Officer; Christina Haselhorst, DC3 Director of Financial Aid and Interim Director of Foundation; Dr. Clayton Tatro, DC3 Vice President for Workforce Development; and Jose Ruiz, DC3 Assistant Professor of Diesel Technology.

Cong Corral

Conqs on campus and around our community.



On March 7, DC3 nursing students and student-athletes from various sports teams visited Dodge City Public Schools to read to children in celebration of Dr. Seuss Day—Read Across America. Pictured (front, left to right) at Miller Elementary School, are Michaela Mink (Cheer), sophomore, Dodge City; Brooklynn Bolte (Cheer), sophomore, Assaria, Kan.; (back, left to right) Avy Zapata (Cheer), sophomore, Pasadena, Texas; Brandon Billingsley (Cheer), sophomore, Colorado Springs, Colo.; Koch-Deng Koch (Men's Basketball), freshman, Banksia Grove, Australia; and KeSean Brown (Men's Basketball), freshman, Lamar, Colo.



On March 26, DC3 hosted a Diesel Tech Career Fair at the Technical Education Center. Designed to help students connect with industry leaders and learn about job opportunities in the diesel technology field, the event also allowed students to interview with several area diesel-tech employers. Participating in the fair were representatives from Kalvesta Implement, Bruckner's Truck and Equipment, Truck Center Companies, Lewis Automotive Group, Central Power Systems and Services, Kansas Department of Transportation, Northern Natural Gas, American Implement, Foley Equipment, Peterbilt Platinum Service Center, and KanEquip. Pictured above, interviewing Josh Kolbeck (right), DC3 dual-credit student from Spearville, Kan., are Garrett Jantz and Corey Minton of Northern Natural Gas.



On March 13, DC3 Music Department students showcased their talents by performing a mix of popular songs and classic Broadway hits at the Little Theatre. Featuring solo acts, group ensembles, and skits, the Broadway Extravaganza concert allowed each one of the performers to shine.



LANCE ZIESCH

On April 9, DC3 Athletics hosted a meet-and-greet celebration for members of the women's basketball team at the Skinner Student Activity Center. The reception, hosted in honor of the program's historic season and first-ever Final Four appearance, allowed fans a chance to get team photos and autographs. Above, student-athlete Morgan Ruff, freshman, Hanston, Kan., signs autographs for some young Conq fans.



JORGE H. GARCIA

On April 25, students from the Visual Arts Department showcased their talents at the spring Student Art Show, which kicked off with a lively opening reception. As part of Dodge City's Final Friday celebration, the event honored several student artists and featured live music from Interim Band Director Katherine Bowden. Students honored with Outstanding Achievement Awards included: Samantha Batres, sophomore, Dodge City (painting); Crystal Estrada Jacquez, freshman, Hanston, Kan. (ceramics); and Alfredo Ortiz-Heredia Jr., freshman, Independence, Ore. (metalsmithing).



COURTESY OF DC3-ARIZONA

A total of 32 students, faculty and staff, from the DC3-Arizona flight instructor program, participated in their first-ever Community Service Day on April 17. Beginning at the DC3-Arizona teaching location, in Chandler, Ariz., with free T-shirts, games, and purple donuts, the participants then carpooled to the Midwest Food Bank, in Gilbert, Ariz. There, the DC3-Arizona volunteers received instructions for their task, which was to assemble nearly 5,000 hygiene kits for those in need.



CHEYENNE DAVIS

On April 24, the DC3 Music Department presented the spring Student Music Recital at the Little Theatre. Featuring students of Kerry J. Kuplic, Professor of Vocal Music; Katherine Bowden, Interim Band Director; and Gloria Morford, Part-Time Accompanist; the concert included solos, duets, and quartets.

Cong Corral

Conqs on campus and around our community.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

On April 16, DC3 faculty and staff were honored for their years of dedicated service during the 2025 Employee Recognition Banquet at Boot Hill Museum. The event acknowledged faculty and staff members who had reached milestones of five, 10, and 20 years of service. Employees honored in the 10- and 20-year categories included (from left to right) Christina Haselhorst, Director of Financial Aid (for 10 years); Dylan Faulin, Professor of Mathematics (for 20 years); Earle (Van) Kenton, Professor of Mathematics (for 20 years); and Cole Ballard, Head Track/Cross Country Coach (for 20 years). Not pictured are Corey Garcia, Maintenance Carpenter (for 10 years); and Justin Hergert, Fleet Operations Manager (for 10 years).



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

On May 2, the DC3 Jazz Band took to the Little Theatre stage for a vibrant evening of music under the direction of Katherine Bowden, Interim Band Director. The ensemble performed several timeless classics, including “Blue Moon” and “Toto,” among others.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

Employees honored at the April 16 Employee Recognition Banquet in the five-year category included (from left to right) Leticia Guereca, Student Support Services Academic Advisor; Dr. Gregory Roberts, Director for TRIO Support Services and Talent Search Programs; Thomas (Mario) Sanchez, Professor of Climate and Energy Control Technologies (HVAC); Dr. Clayton Tatro, Vice President for Workforce Development; Dr. Jay Kinzer, Vice President of Student Services and Risk Management; and Joseph Wood, Security Officer. Not pictured are Michael Brewster, Spirit Coordinator; Dr. Geneva Diamond, Professor of English; Anathan Gibson, Assistant Football Coach; Bianca Loza-Hernandez, Assistant Men's and Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Coach; and Austin Wilson, Webmaster.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

The DC3 Music Department wrapped up its spring semester with a powerful final concert on May 4, at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Windthorst, Kan. Titled “Echoes of Nature: A Spring Choir and Symphony,” the concert featured choral and instrumental ensembles led by Kerry J. Kuplic, Professor of Vocal Music, and Katherine Bowden, Interim Band Director.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

DC3 and the Community Housing Association of Dodge City (CHAD) hosted an open house and hamburger feed on May 8, at the site of the newest CHAD house, which is located at 1304 Military Ave. Pictured above (front row, left to right) are Kevin Navarrete, dual-credit high school student, Dodge City; Wilmer Hernandez Raymundo, dual-credit high school student, Dodge City; Luis Velasquez Castro, dual-credit high school student, Dodge City; Trevor Taghon, sophomore, Rockford, Mich.; Josue Gallegos, dual-credit high school student, Dodge City; Izaya Myers, dual-credit high school student, Dodge City; Loren Coval, Building/Construction Technology Assistant; (back row) Patrick Shiew, Professor of Building/Construction Technology; Derek Talamantes Arroyo, freshman, Dodge City; Giovanni Adame Salas, sophomore, Dodge City; Emilio Rodriguez, dual-credit high school student, Kinsley, Kan.; Davin Amaro, sophomore, Ford, Kan.; Evan Pyle, sophomore, Dodge City; and Javier Hipolito Lujan, dual-credit high school student, Dodge City.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

The DC3 Kappa Psi Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) honor society inducted its newest members on May 7, during a ceremony at the DC3 Student Union Board Room. Thirteen members attended the event, which featured remarks from Renee Allen, PTK Advisor, and Dr. Harold Nolte, DC3 President. In addition, Agnes Hegardt, sophomore, Lund, Sweden, received the Kansas All-State Academic Team honor, which was co-sponsored by PTK and the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees. Pictured (front row, left to right) are Leisey Tiana Leilani Keli'i, sophomore, Kea'au, Hawaii; Juliana Molinero, dual-credit high school student, Dodge City; Candace Renay Villasenor, sophomore, Dodge City; Michael May, sophomore, Cimarron, Kan.; Nathan Guile, freshman, Dodge City; and Agnes Hegardt, sophomore, Lund, Sweden. Pictured (back row, left to right) are Dr. Harold Nolte, DC3 President; Maria Yessica Ponce Castillo, sophomore, Dodge City; Allyson Hamblin, sophomore, Wichita, Kan.; Frankie Martens, freshman, Hooker, Okla.; Madison Leigh Wallman, sophomore, Dandridge, Tenn.; Iran Eory Rodriguez, sophomore, Dodge City; Meike Pätzold, freshman, Ludwigshafen, Germany; Tess De Zanet, sophomore, Bordeaux, France; and Renee Allen, PTK Advisor.



DC3 Service Learning students include (front row, left to right) Ada Mishkind, freshman, Littleton, Colo.; Anyssa Macias-Adame, freshman, Dodge City; Amery Macias-Adame, freshman, Dodge City; Barbara “Percy” Ryder, freshman, Dodge City; Sha’Wil Clark, freshman, Wilmington, Del.; (back row) Nathan Gunderson, freshman, Olathe, Kan.; Jose Figueroa, freshman, Santiago, Chile; Calvin Warrillow, freshman, Toronto, Canada; Nia Anderson, freshman, Forest Park, Ga.; and Koch-Deng Koch, freshman, Banksia Grove, Australia.

Students Help Pass Pet Microchipping Ordinance

By Alba Gutierrez-Ortiz

Students from Dodge City Community College (DC3) have turned a semester-long classroom initiative into citywide policy.

On May 5, the Dodge City Commission voted 5-0 to approve a student-drafted ordinance requiring all cats and dogs within city limits to be microchipped as part of the registration process.

The new ordinance is intended to reduce the number of stray animals in Dodge City and improve efforts to reunite lost pets with their owners. It represents the latest success from the college’s Service Learning program, which blends academic instruction with real-world community engagement.

Jay Gooldy, Assistant Professor of English, said, “These students spent

the semester diving deep into research, drafting legal language, consulting with city officials, and building a coalition of support. They didn’t just learn about civic engagement—they lived it. We wrote the actual ordinance that will now improve the lives of animals and pet owners across our community.”

Microchipping provides a permanent, non-invasive form of pet identification. The chip, about the size of a grain of rice, is implanted just under the skin between the shoulder blades.

The chip is not a GPS tracker, but rather stores a unique ID number that connects to the pet owner’s contact information. Animal control officers and veterinarians can scan the chip to help return lost animals to their homes.

The ordinance is expected to ease the burden on local shelters and streamline the process of identifying and recovering lost pets.

The initiative was developed by students in the college’s Service Learning English Composition I course, which challenges students to identify community needs and develop practical solutions through research, outreach and collaboration.

Over the semester, students studied animal control practices, drafted ordinance language, and presented their proposal to the city commission for formal consideration.

This pet-focused initiative is not the students’ first successful service-learning project, however. The program began by addressing a critical issue on campus: food

insecurity. In response, students created Conq Care Cabinets, which serve as free, accessible food pantries for students.

Today, there are four cabinets across campus—in the Library, the Student Union, near the Student Achievement and Resources Center (SARC), and on the second floor of the Humanities building.

Stocked with shelf-stable food and hygiene products, the cabinets are available to all students and maintained through ongoing donations and student coordination.

Building on that foundation, students expanded their community impact this semester by partnering with SWKS K9 Pawsibilities, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to rescuing and rehoming animals in southwestern Kansas.

Together, the students and the organization have co-hosted two successful adoption events, creatively branded as “Pawties.” These events provided opportunities for local residents to meet adoptable pets, learn about animal care, and complete on-site adoptions.

Amery Macias-Adame, a freshman from Dodge City, said, “The ordinance is really important. I’ve lived in Dodge City my whole life, and I’ve seen firsthand the animal cruelty that’s unfortunately a big issue when it comes to pet ownership here. That was a major reason why this project mattered to me. These animals don’t deserve to go through that—they deserve safe, loving homes.”

The collaboration provided students with direct experience in event planning, nonprofit coordination, and animal welfare outreach—all while strengthening local efforts to reduce the number of unclaimed or abandoned pets.

The pet microchipping ordinance reflects the full scope of the service learning experience, combining research, civic advocacy, nonprofit collaboration and practical action. It also reinforces the idea that meaningful change can start at any level—with anyone willing to put in the work.

Nathan Gunderson, a freshman from Olathe, Kan., said, “This was probably my favorite project because it connected directly to what we were learning in class—things like microchipping, adopting ordinances, and understanding how those processes play a role in society and the impact they can have. It was really cool to see the role we were able to play in local government.”

In addition, Gunderson said there is a “serious overcrowding issue” in animal shelters across Kansas.

“A lot of people, when they no longer want to care for their pets, just release them into the wild,” he said. “That leads to all kinds of problems—disease, lack of vaccinations, and legal issues with stray animals. The ordinance we helped pass is going to make a real difference. It will ensure animals get their shots and are properly cared for. It also holds pet owners accountable. If a dog bites someone, we’ll be able to tell if it had a rabies shot and identify the owner. This ordinance will help clean up the community and improve public safety.”

This project stands as a clear example of how student-led initiatives can

produce lasting, positive change in the community. Through their work, students not only addressed a public policy issue but also strengthened ties between local government, educational institutions, and nonprofit partners.

Gooldy said, “They [the students] showed that college students can shape policy and change lives with persistence, teamwork, and purpose.”

For details on the new ordinance or pet registration rules, residents can contact Dodge City Animal Control at (620) 225-1567 or stop by the office at 104 N. 14th Ave. To learn more about DC3’s English Composition I Service Learning course, contact Jay Gooldy at jgooldy@dc3.edu or (620) 227-9231. ■





PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLY GARMER

1st Sgt. Kelly Garmer, who served as a Marine One Crew Chief for former presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, is now a student in the DC3-Arizona Flight Instructor Pilot (Helicopter) Program.

Retired Marine Takes Flight with DC3's Helicopter Program

by Lance Ziesch

Retired Marine, 1st Sgt. Kelly Garmer, who is currently a student in the Dodge City Community College (DC3) Flight Instructor Pilot (Helicopter) Program, is no stranger to military efficiency. Due to his background and life experiences, he recently endorsed the DC3 program as “possibly the best in the country.”

“My path to DC3 was a little different than most, I believe,” Garmer said. “I attended a flight school in California prior to moving here [Arizona] with my wife and discovering the amazing program DC3 offers.”

With his extensive military experience serving in senior management and other leadership positions, he said he can quickly spot the difference between professional and unprofessional organizations.

“I can emphatically say that my previous school was a very, very poorly run and managed organization ... actually the polar opposite of what DC3 built here,” he said. “I would anecdotally argue that the flight instructor program DC3 built is one of the best—possibly the best—program in the nation.”

Because Garmer is so passionate about the DC3-Arizona flight program, which is located in Chandler, Ariz., he recently decided to reach out to some of the military contacts he had made at the Education Center at Camp Pendleton, in San Diego, Calif.

“It all began with casual conversations with Sandy Rice, who later became my friend,” he said, referring to Rice, who is one of several advisors who connect service members with college programs they can pursue after the military.

Because of the many questions Rice was receiving about flight programs, she asked Garmer to visit Camp Pendleton to give a presentation about DC3, as part of her new program called Lunch & Learn.

“Flight programs are somewhat of a mystery,” Garmer said. “You likely don’t know anything about them unless you are a part of them, and they are very complex.”

After hearing about Rice’s idea for the Lunch & Learn program, the commanding general approved it, and Garmer was scheduled for the very first Lunch & Learn on March 12.

“It was a massive success,” he said. “We oversold the event, expecting less than 12, and 50 attended.”

Since that March presentation, Garmer said he has received numerous phone calls and messages from prospective pilots. And because it was so successful, Rice and her counterparts want DC3 to come back in the fall, as well as possibly adding some talks at other military installations.

Dr. Adam John, DC3 Provost, said that Rice was so impressed with Garmer’s presentation that she had to visit the program and see the facilities

for herself, to understand why he spoke so highly about it.

“I am so proud of Kelly and everything that he has achieved as a student and in the military. It is exciting to see him share his passion for flying and his love for the DC3 Flight Instructor program with others,” John said. “He typifies the caliber of students we have in our program, and I would like to thank him and all of our veterans for their service.”

Garmer, who grew up on his family’s farm near the small, rural town of Worthington, Penn., graduated from Highlands High School in 2002.

“I was a senior in high school, in economics class, when another teacher came into our classroom and told the economics teacher to turn on the TV,” he said, referring to the 9/11 attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. “I remember watching the first tower burning, then the second plane crash into the second tower. Up until that point, I considered entering the Marine Corps, but that single event made up my mind. My decision to join was no longer a consideration.”

Enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps two years later in 2003, Garmer attended Recruit Training at Parris Island, S.C. After graduating, he received orders to Pensacola, Fla., for the Aviation Structures Common Core course, then Lemoore, Calif., for the Hydraulics/

Pneumatics Technician course. Upon completion of both courses, he earned the military occupational specialty (MOS) 6062, Aircraft Intermediate Hydraulics/Pneumatics Technician.

"I served as a helicopter mechanic and crew chief for the preponderance of my career," he said. "I worked on, in some capacity, every type/model/series aircraft in the Marine Corps' inventory except the F-35. That aircraft came to service after my selection, promotion, and subsequent assignment to a different unit."

As a crew chief, Garmer logged approximately 2,200 flight hours, with approximately 700 of those in combat theater spread across Iraq, Afghanistan, and other places.

"My duties as a crew chief included aerial gunnery and maintaining the aircraft's integrity in flight, as well as managing passengers," he said. "I also have special forces experience."

Apart from serving in combat theater, Garmer also had the opportunity to travel around the world, which also included living in Japan for a few years. However, he said there are a few highlights that definitely stand out in his career.

He had the privilege to lead thousands of Marines in garrison and in combat. He achieved the title of Marine Corps Drill Instructor. He served with the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron and was the Marine Air Group 11 Quality Assurance Chief. And he was promoted to first sergeant, then subsequently selected from a pool of 750 Marine first sergeants (and thousands of master sergeants) for the Army's Sergeant Major Course.

In addition, he served with Marine Helicopter Squadron One from 2007-2011, which is the unit that provides executive global transport for the U.S. President and any other visiting foreign dignitaries.

"I started out working there as a mechanic and crew chief for the non-presidential aircraft, then transitioned to the presidential helicopters, the ones that you see on the news with the painted white tops," he said. "After earning my plane captain rating, my leadership selected me to be one of four Marine One Crew Chiefs. These are the folks you see saluting the presidents as they board or disembark the aircraft in their dress blues."

In the role of Marine One Crew Chief, Garmer had the opportunity to travel with the president around the world. During his tenure, he traveled with George W. Bush and Barack Obama to international destinations such as the Taj Mahal, the

Pyramids of Giza, the Great Wall of China, Warsaw, Saint Petersburg, and the Vatican.

From all of his "president" stories, his favorite is about President Bush and the first time they met, which was at Camp David.

"There is a recreational room and bowling alley at the compound for us to use while we are there," he said. "Anyway, my friend and I were shooting pool when someone came up behind me as I was taking a shot and bumped my cue stick, totally messing up my shot."

Assuming it was his friend, he turned around to see that it was actually President Bush.

"I remember being so confused, surprised, and somewhat in shock," he said. "I stood there awkwardly, not saying anything, and the president said, 'It's okay, son, you can say hi.' That sort of snapped me out of my befuddled state, and then the president asked if he could shoot pool with us for a little while."

Not knowing what to say exactly, as this was the first time he had ever met a president, Garmer looked at his friend for help. But before either Marine could answer, the president said, "What are you going to say, no? I'm the president!"

Although Garmer takes pride in his military career and the incredible experiences he has had along the way, he said he is even prouder of his wife Bri.

"I believe in my heart of hearts that she is the reason why I found the success I did in the latter half of my career," he said. "She is the best thing in my world, and I am so fortunate to have her in my life."

Garmer credits Bri for motivating him to get his education while he was still on active duty. Before they met, he hadn't taken a single college class. By the end of his military career in July 2024, he had earned one associate degree, three bachelor's degrees, and one master's.

"The only thing I never did in a helicopter leading up to that point was actually pilot one," he said. "So, the natural progression seemed to be to learn how to fly."

For now, Garmer said he is "simply ... a student in the Flight Instructor Program" at DC3's Chandler location.

"My immediate goals are to complete the two remaining flight instructor certificates," he said. "Then hopefully, work for DC3 as a flight instructor, so I can help others earn their helicopter piloting certificates. I'm not really sure beyond that. I just hope to be of value—a good steward—to DC3 and the program, since I believe it's one of the best in the country." ■

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



COURTESY OF DC3 FINE ARTS

DC3 Choir Raises Funds for Compass Behavioral Health

by Lance Ziesch

The Dodge City Community College (DC3) Music Department raised \$240 in freewill donations for Compass Behavioral Health at its Broadway Extravaganza Concert on March 13.

Kerry J. Kuplic, DC3 Professor of Vocal Music, said the idea for the donation came out of a Broadway concert song suggestion from Katherine Bowden, DC3 Interim Band Director, and Brian Richardson, Compass Case Manager (and choir member). Both recommended the choir perform "You Will Be Found" from "Dear Evan Hansen."

"It's a very powerful song that speaks of the importance of knowing that no matter how dark life can seem, no one is alone. There will always be someone there for us," he said. "Once we decided on that song, raising money for Compass just seemed to click—it seemed like a perfect organization to support."

After speaking with Compass Program Manager, Nichole Broils, in the weeks before the concert, the group decided to earmark the donations for Compass Behavioral Health's Dodge City Community Support Services, he said.

In addition to collecting donations for Compass, Broils was also in attendance at the concert to help build awareness and share literature about the services Compass provides. ■

DC3 presented its donation to Compass Behavioral Health on April 4. Pictured above (left to right) are Brian Richardson, Compass Case Manager; Kerry J. Kuplic, Professor of Vocal Music; Katherine Bowden, Interim Band Director; and Nichole Broils, Compass Program Manager.



Spring Fling '25

Monday, April 28 - Friday, May 2

Spring Fling returned for another week of food, games, and fun, from Monday, April 28, until Friday, May 2, courtesy of DC3 Student Activities.

The week kicked off with the "Farm Fest" cookout on April 28, where the aroma of great food filled the quad, thanks to Black Hills Energy manning the grill. The event also featured a dunk tank with DC3 President, Dr. Harold Nolte, and other brave volunteers.

On April 29, students showed their competitive edge in the "Team Spirit Showdown," which involved mid-day food-eating contests in the cafeteria and an evening spike ball tournament in the quad.

On April 30, students enjoyed a glitzy Las Vegas-themed dance in the Skinner Student Activity Center called "Lucky Nights, Vegas Lights."

On May 1, they dove into waterslide fun during the "Aloha Adventure," on the east side of Shelden Hall.

Rounding out the week was "Pajama Play Day," on May 2, which featured donuts that morning on the quad and inflatables that evening in the auxiliary gym. ■



LANCE ZIESCH

Spring Fling 2025 kicked off with a free cookout on the college quad as part of Monday's "Farm Fest." Like in past years, Black Hills Energy cooked hot dogs and hamburgers, while Great Western Dining Inc. served the food.



LANCE ZIESCH

One of the highlights of each year's Spring Fling is the dunk tank, especially when Dr. Harold Nolte, DC3 President, takes his turn! The dunk tank, along with the free hamburger feed, were part of Spring Fling's "Farm Fest" on Monday, April 28.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

On April 29, students participated in a variety of competitions for Tuesday's "Team Spirit Showdown." Beginning with food-challenges in the cafeteria over the lunch hour, the day ended with a spikeball tournament in the quad. Pictured (left to right) during the donut challenge are Sofia Ahmed, sophomore, Townsville, Australia; Whitley Cash, sophomore, Laverne, Okla.; Abigail Zabel, sophomore, Satanta, Kan.; Kloe Nelson, sophomore, Leedey, Okla.; Cody Vance, freshman, Scott City, Kan.; and Wesley Rosa, freshman, Trumbull, Conn.



JORGE H. GARCIA

The spikeball tournament winners receive their prizes on April 29. Pictured (left to right) are Myles Slade, freshman, Temple Hills, Md.; Loden West, sophomore, Ellsworth, Kan.; Paulina Duenas, Student Activities Coordinator; Shorna Preston, sophomore, Gold Coast, Australia; and Mia Jordan, sophomore, Gold Coast, Australia.



JORGE H. GARCIA

Iran Rodriguez (left), sophomore, Dodge City; and Meike Pätzold (right), sophomore, Ludwigshafen am Rhein, Germany; face off in the jousting inflatable on May 2.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORITZ

On Wednesday, April 30, students enjoyed “Lucky Nights, Vegas Lights” in the Skinner Student Activity Center. In addition to Vegas-style games, Student Activities also hosted a school dance in the space. Above, Dr. Jay Kinzer (right), Vice President of Student Services and Risk Management, deals roulette.



JORGE H. GARCIA

Beatriz Lampugnani Cornachini (left), sophomore, Itapora, Brazil; and Rayssa Ferreira Da Silva, sophomore, Palmas, Brazil; enjoy the Velcro wall inflatable during “Pajama Play Day” on Friday, May 2, in the auxiliary gym.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORITZ

Back by popular demand, the waterslide on the east side of Shelden Hall returned on Thursday, May 1, as a part of “Aloha Adventure.” Pictured above (right to left) are Morgan Siders, freshman, Dodge City; Yolisabeth Martinez Lares, dual-credit high school student, Dodge City; Wendy Ramirez, freshman, Dodge City; and Jocelyn Fernandez, dual-credit high school student, Dodge City.





CHRISTINA HASELHORST

A total of 249 students walked across the stage to receive degrees or certificates at the college's 2025 commencement ceremony on May 10.

DC3 Celebrates Its 89th Graduating Class

by Lance Ziesch

The Dodge City Community College (DC3) graduation weekend began with the college's fifth-annual Honors Banquet, on Friday, May 9, at the Boot Hill Casino and Resort Conference Center.

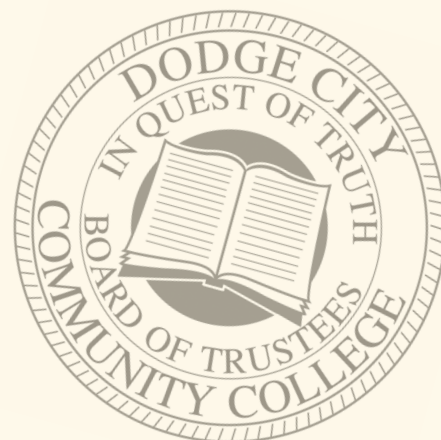
Featuring remarks from Distinguished Alumnus **Brig. Gen. Jason L. Knobbe**, the evening included a special recognition ceremony for the college's High Honors and Honors graduates.

On Saturday, May 10, the college hosted its annual graduation ceremonies at the United Wireless Arena. Up first was the Nursing Pinning Ceremony at 10 a.m., which was followed by Commencement at 3 p.m.

At Commencement, **Alexis Bradshaw**, a freshman from Jetmore, Kan., gave the invocation, and **Caylee Grace May**, a sophomore from Amarillo, Texas, gave the student leader remarks. In addition, Knobbe also gave a second address as the 2025 Distinguished Alumnus.

Absent from the Commencement protocol for many years, the cap toss was brought back this year by the graduation committee. So, after graduates were told to turn their tassels, the caps of the Class of 2025 soared through the air.

Of the 2,053 people who attended the 2025 Commencement ceremony, 249 were DC3 students receiving degrees and/or certificates. ■





ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

Christina Haselhorst, Director of Financial Aid, performs "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Commencement.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

Alexis Bradshaw, freshman, Jetmore, Kan., gives the invocation at the 2025 graduation ceremony.



JORGE H. GARCIA

Student Government Association President, Caylee May, pauses for a quick photo prior to Commencement. May would later deliver the student leader remarks during the ceremony.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

Dr. Harold Nolte, President, gives his introduction at the 2025 graduation ceremony.



JORGE H. GARCIA

Brig. Gen. Jason L. Knobbe, the 2025 Dodge City Community College Distinguished Alumnus, gives his remarks during the DC3 Commencement ceremony on May 10.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

Members of Dodge City Community College's 89th graduating class toss their caps in the air on May 10, at the United Wireless Arena.



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

The Honor Guard, made up of members of the 22nd Air Refueling Wing and the 184th Wing, from McConnell Air Force Base, in Wichita, Kan., present the colors at the May 10 Commencement ceremony.



Nursing Pinning guest speaker, Ford County Fire Chief, Rob Boyd, addresses the Class of 2025.



Martin Sanchez, sophomore, Dodge City, was honored with the Floris Jean Hampton Bluebird Award, which recognizes an exemplary nursing student for excellence in leadership, citizenship, and mentoring inside and outside the classroom.



The nursing program's Class of 2025 includes sophomores (from left to right, front row) Ivana Esparza, Dodge City; Maria Montes Sanchez, Dodge City; Daisy Quinones, Dodge City; Leslie Medina, Dodge City; Jusely Rincon, Dodge City; (back row) Emilie Campbell, Ashland, Kan.; Martin Sanchez, Dodge City; Gustavo Cabrera Diaz, Cimarron, Kan.; Joana Ramirez Aguirre, Dodge City; Peter Saenz Castellanos, Dodge City; Adrian Olivares Mejia, Dodge City; and Veronica Tapia Miranda, Dodge City.

JORGE H. GARCIA

JORGE H. GARCIA



CHRISTINA HASELHORST



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ



JORGE H. GARCIA

Knobbe Named Distinguished Alumnus

by Lance Ziesch

Brig. Gen. Jason L. Knobbe, Commander of the Kansas Air National Guard, was tapped as the Dodge City Community College (DC3) 2025 Distinguished Alumnus for the college's May graduation activities.

Knobbe, a native of Jetmore, Kan., graduated from DC3 with an Associate of Arts degree in Psychology in 1991.

"I grew up in Jetmore, Kansas, and my dad was an instructor at DC3, so I have always had a great respect for the school," he said. "It is an absolute honor and a privilege to be the next DC3 Distinguished Alumnus! I never thought that one day I would receive this honor. It truly means the world to me."

Knobbe's father, Craig, was an instructor at DC3 for 18 years, until his retirement in 2006.

"My dad taught at the high school level before he came to DC3 to teach math and engineering," he said. "I had him for four classes! He was tough, and having your dad as a teacher is an interesting dynamic!"

The summer after Knobbe's junior year at Jetmore High School, his dad began teaching at DC3.

"I have fond memories of being able to go visit him in his office on campus and occasionally the two of us going to lunch," he said. "That being said, I intentionally never took one of his courses!"

In addition to his studies at DC3, Knobbe tried to fit in as many martial arts classes as he could.

"I also belonged to the martial arts clubs that worked out and trained in the evenings," he said. "With school, work, and martial arts, it kept me focused and taught me a lot about discipline and drive."

Looking back on his DC3 experience, Knobbe said what stands out most to him today was the college's "top-notch" instructors.

"While the college was quite a bit bigger than my high school, the classes were small, and the instructors were devoted to making sure the students understood the material," he said. "They were approachable if you ever had an issue or a question. I'm thankful for their dedication to me and all the other DC3 students. DC3 was a great way to transition from a small high school to a large university setting."

After DC3, Knobbe got to experience that "large university setting" when he transferred to the University of Kansas. Three years later, in 1994, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Education degree, which he followed up with a Master of Science in Education degree in 1998.

Promoted to brigadier general with the Kansas Air National Guard in 2023, Knobbe currently serves as the Assistant Adjutant General-Air and Commander. In addition, he is the chief advisor to the Adjutant General on all matters pertaining to Air National Guard programs, policies, operations, management, command, and control of the Kansas Air National Guard.

He also provides staff assistance guidance and direction concerning Air National Guard personnel, administration, training, recruiting and retention, logistics, transportation, and budgetary matters.

Knobbe commands more than 2,300 Kansas Air National Guard airmen, serving in two wings, who operate the most diverse set of missions across the Air Force portfolio. Furthermore, he is an active advisor on the Region 3 Strategic Planning System Council.

Prior to his current assignment, Knobbe served as the Chief of Staff-Air, 184th Wing Commander, 184th Vice Commander,



Recognized for achievement in military service, Brig. Gen. Jason L. Knobbe, addresses graduates at the fifth-annual Honors Banquet on May 9, as the college's 2025 Distinguished Alumnus. Knobbe is the 64th individual to be honored by the program since it began in 1963.

184th Mission Support Group Commander, 184th Regional Support Group Deputy Commander, and 177th Information Aggressor Squadron Commander (a National Security Agency Certified Cyber and Information Operations Red Team).

Knobbe is also a Cyberspace Operations Officer, Aircraft Commander, and a Weapons Systems Operator whose assignments span all three career fields. In addition, he has also provided support for several deployments during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

During his career, Knobbe has been awarded many prestigious honors, including the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Air and Space Commendation Medal, and the Air and Space Achievement Medal.

On May 10, in his capacity as the college's 64th Distinguished Alumnus, Knobbe challenged the 2025 graduates to remember three key points: 1) Always stay curious! Education is vital. Learning is a gift. 2) Embrace Change! Our society and the world are constantly changing. Be part of the solution. And 3) Pursue your passion! But also know there will be adversity and even failures along your journey.

In addition, he urged them to pursue their dreams and to take advantage of the opportunities along the way.

"I would encourage each and every one of you to identify your passion, pursue it diligently, and enjoy the journey you are on," he said. "We are all on a journey, and we all have a story to tell. ... Put in the time, energy, and work required. It is worth it in the end, and you will thrive!" ■

DC3's Golden Shield Yearbook Returns

After a 34-Year Absence, the College's Annual Is Back

By DC3 Marketing and Public Relations Staff

After a 34-year hiatus, the Dodge City Community College (DC3) yearbook—the Golden Shield—is back in production.

Revived by the DC3 Office of Marketing and Public Relations, the new Golden Shield, which chronicles the fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters at DC3, will be printed by Jostens Inc. and will be available in both print and digital formats.

“The last Golden Shield yearbook was published in 1991, and it was the 26th volume in the series,” Lance Ziesch, DC3 Director of Marketing and Public Relations, said. “We are picking up things from there, which means the 2025 edition will be labeled as volume 27.”

According to a Conquistador newspaper article from April 1, 1966, the Golden Shield name was suggested by English instructor, Winifred Russell, who had submitted the winning title in a school-wide naming contest.

From 1966 until 1991, the Golden Shield was produced each year by the college's journalism department. However, after the college restructured the journalism program for the 1991-1992 academic year, there were no longer provisions for a yearbook staff to produce an annual.

Instead of canceling the yearbook outright, the college tried unsuccessfully to pass the project to the DC3 Student Senate—the forerunner of today's Student Government Association (SGA).

In the Nov. 6, 1991, issue of the Conquistador newspaper, the Page 1 headline read, “Student Senate votes out yearbook.” The Student Senate Vice President, David Sherraden, is quoted in the article as saying, “We (Student Senate) do not have the time or the people to put together a yearbook.”

Following the Student Senate's decision, conversations continued around campus about what to do about the Golden Shield. Through these discussions, two solutions were presented: Either reinstate the yearbook or replace it with a quarterly magazine, which was a community college journalism trend at the time. Finally, three years later in 1994, the college decided it would go the magazine route.

In a Feb. 23, 1994, Conquistador newspaper story, the DC3 president at that time, Dr. Thomas Gamble, said the college's journalism program needed a “slicker document other than the newspaper” to be included with the college's journalism curriculum that would help record the year's activities and provide journalism students with a more up-to-date mass communications experience.

“We were concerned about not having a document such as a yearbook or magazine to present to our various publics, which will be reflective of the quality of our programs,” Gamble said in the article. “The magazine reflects very well the mass communications area.”

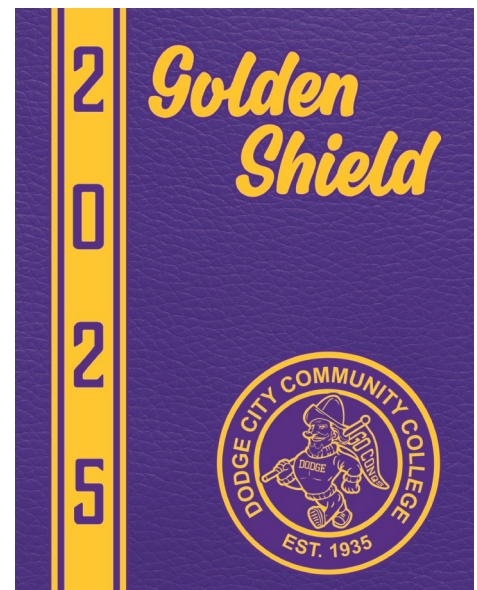
An initiative spearheaded by Stacy Sparks, the college's journalism professor from 1992-2006, the new publication would include traditional yearbook elements, such as student and employee headshots and coverage of the year's events. However, instead of only being published at the end of each year, it would be produced and disseminated on a more-timely basis four times a year.

So, Conquest magazine premiered with its Fall 1994 issue, and it included a story titled “Yearbook returns as a magazine.” In addition to pictures of the yearbook's 1966 and 1991 covers, the two-page spread was illustrated with a cartoon by journalism student Brandon Brigrance that depicted a Conquistador wizard resurrecting the dead and buried Golden Shield yearbook into the new and trendy Conquest magazine.

Ziesch, who was a journalism and agriculture student from Hanston, Kan., arrived at DC3 as a freshman in the fall of 1993. Although he missed the opportunity to work on the Golden Shield by two years, he was on the inaugural staff of Conquest magazine his sophomore year.

“Although it was exciting to be on board for the first year of Conquest, I was a little disappointed that the yearbook had folded a couple of years before I arrived,” he said. “But, who would have thought that 30 years later I would get a chance to work on a Golden Shield yearbook?”

The 2025 Golden Shield is about 95% complete at this time, and Ziesch serves



2025

as the yearbook's editor. However, the book's layout and design are the work of Jorge H. Garcia, Marketing's Content and Communications Coordinator.

Christina Haselhorst, Director of Financial Aid and former Director of the DC3 Foundation, said she is thrilled that the college is once again producing a yearbook.

“Because DC3 is a smaller college, a college yearbook can encapsulate academic and social memories as well as milestones,” she said. “It can provide a historical record of the college's evolution, showcasing everyday life on campus, graduations, championships, social activities, and even fashion trends.”

Haselhorst said that through the years, several alumni members have reached out to the Foundation and Marketing departments to find pictures and articles from their old yearbooks. Of course, if they attended DC3 in the years after the student-produced publications ended, there isn't a lot of archival material available.

“It can be a detriment to not have a yearbook available when alumni begin speaking of memories of their time here, and there is nothing to show them,” she said. “For some of those years, the records were not very well-kept back then.”

Moving forward, Haselhorst said it will be incredibly helpful to have that record of “attendance, accomplishments, and memories” to share at alumni events. It also will be nice to have this information in both a print and digital format, she said.

“Yearbooks can preserve DC3’s traditions, culture, college life, sports events, academic achievements, clubs, and more,” she said. “Future generations will be better able to understand the legacy that was left behind for them by past students.”

DC3 President, Dr. Harold Nolte, said he also is excited about the return of the yearbook for a couple of reasons.

“Not only will the yearbook serve as a permanent record of each academic year, but it will also be a wonderful keepsake for our students and employees,” he said. “Yearbooks are special publications. Oftentimes their value isn’t fully appreciated until many years later.” ■

Editor’s Note: *Conquest* magazine was published for a total of five years. After its final Summer 1999 issue, it quietly went the way of its predecessor, the *Golden Shield*, leaving the college once again with just one student-produced publication: *The Conquistador* newspaper.

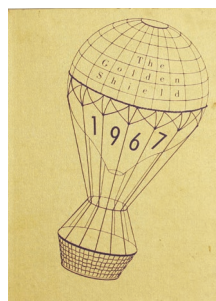
In 2009, the college phased out the journalism program—although the journalism curriculum remained in the college catalog until the 2017-2018 academic year—and the *Conquistador* ceased print editions with its May 6, 2009, issue. Continuing briefly in a volunteer-produced digital format, it folded for good in 2010.

However, that was not to be the end of the *Conquistador*. After a nine-year absence, the Office of Marketing and Public Relations brought it back in 2019 as a monthly newsletter publishing issues in February, March, and April.

Building on the success of the newsletter, the Marketing Department expanded the *Conquistador* to a glossy magazine format beginning with its Spring 2020 issue. Currently, the *Conquistador* is published twice per year with one issue in the fall and one in the spring.



1966



1967



1968



1969



1970



1971



1972



1973



1974



1975



1976



1977



1978



1979



1980



1981



1982



1983



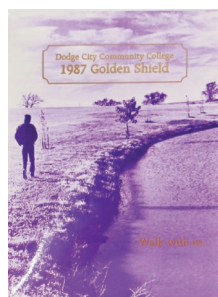
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1985



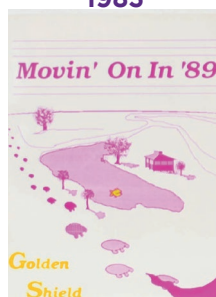
1986



1987



1988



1989



1990



1991



THE 2024-2025 CONQUISTADOR WOMEN'S CONQUISTADOR BASKETBALL TEAM. Pictured (left to right, front row) are Kiana Herrera, soph., McClave, Colo.; Nia Anderson, fresh., Forest Park, Ga.; Konstantina Manziori, soph., Athens, Greece; Becca Unruh, soph., Dodge City; Tayah Morgan, soph., Perth, Australia; Morgan Ruff, fresh., Hanston, Kan.; (second row) Landon Steele, Head Coach; Savi Mi, fresh., Taipei City, Taiwan; Layla-J Cameron, soph., Gold Coast, Australia; Mia Jordan, soph., Gold Coast, Australia; Sofia Ahmed, fresh., Townsville, Australia; Shorna Preston, soph., Gold Coast, Australia; Morane Dossou, soph., Charleville-Mezieres, France; Ashley Lee, fresh., Taipei City, Taiwan; and Ethan McIlhargey, Assistant Coach.

Women's Basketball Makes First-Ever Final Four Appearance

by Mike Smith

The Dodge City women's basketball program has rewritten the history books over the past few years, and the 2024-2025 season is the best in school history.

The Conqs put together a season that saw them win the Kansas Jayhawk Community College Conference (KJCCC) for the fourth time in school history while laying claim to the program's first-ever Region 6 championship title.

For the third straight year, the Conqs earned a trip to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division I National Tournament and would make the Final Four for the first time. The Conqs finished the season 31-5 amassing the most wins in a single season in school history.

After winning the regular KJCCC title, the Conqs embarked on the postseason where they had a first-round bye in the Region 6 tournament before taking down Barton 72-40 in the quarterfinals.

In the semifinals, the Conqs would top No. 25 Butler 67-58 punching their ticket to the region championship for the first time since the 2003-2004 season.

In the March 15 championship, the Conqs would put on a defensive clinic shutting down No. 20 Coffeyville in a 55-35 win earning an automatic bid to the national tournament.

The Conqs would earn the No. 4 seed and a first-round bye at the NJCAA DI National Tournament, and in the second round would take on Arizona Western on March 27, who the Conqs beat 72-52.

In the Elite Eight, the Conqs got some revenge from an earlier season loss, and a loss at the national tournament two years prior, by beating New Mexico 58-41 on March 29, punching their ticket to the Final Four.

The Conqs would battle against Shelton State in the Final Four contest on March 31, but fall 59-60 in overtime to cap the season.

The season saw the Conqs earn recognition on several levels including **Layla-J Cameron** and **Shorna Preston** becoming the fourth and fifth players to earn NJCAA All-American honors in program history. Cameron was named second-team All-American, and Preston was selected as honorable mention.

At the conference level, the Conqs had the most KJCCC All-Conference honorees they have ever had in a single season with five, as Cameron and Preston were both selected first-team all-conference.

At the same time, **Tayah Morgan** and **Konstantina Mantziori** each picked up second-team honors, and **Becca Unruh** was chosen as honorable mention.

Preston was also named KJCCC Defensive Player of the Year and **Head Coach Landon Steele**, for the second time in the last three seasons, was named KJCCC DI Coach of the Year. ■

DC3 Cheer Brings Home Trophies

At Nationals, Intermediate Team Three-Peats as Champions and Advanced Team Takes Second

by Mike Smith

The trophy case got a little more crowded for Dodge City cheer as the Conquistadors brought home more hardware after competing at the National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) Cheer National Championship, on April 10-11, in Daytona Beach, Fla.

For the third straight year, the Conqs hoisted the trophy for the Intermediate Small Coed Junior College division beating out four other teams in the competition to three-peat as champions. The Conqs Advanced Small Coed Junior College

team put together a strong showing at the Bandshell and came away with a second-place finish.

The Intermediate team started strong competing in the Ocean Center Arena setting the tone for the competition with a 95.22 score on their Day One routine. The Conqs would fire back on Day Two with another strong performance finishing with a score of 94.555 to win by nearly five points.

The Conqs have fielded a team in the intermediate small coed junior college level

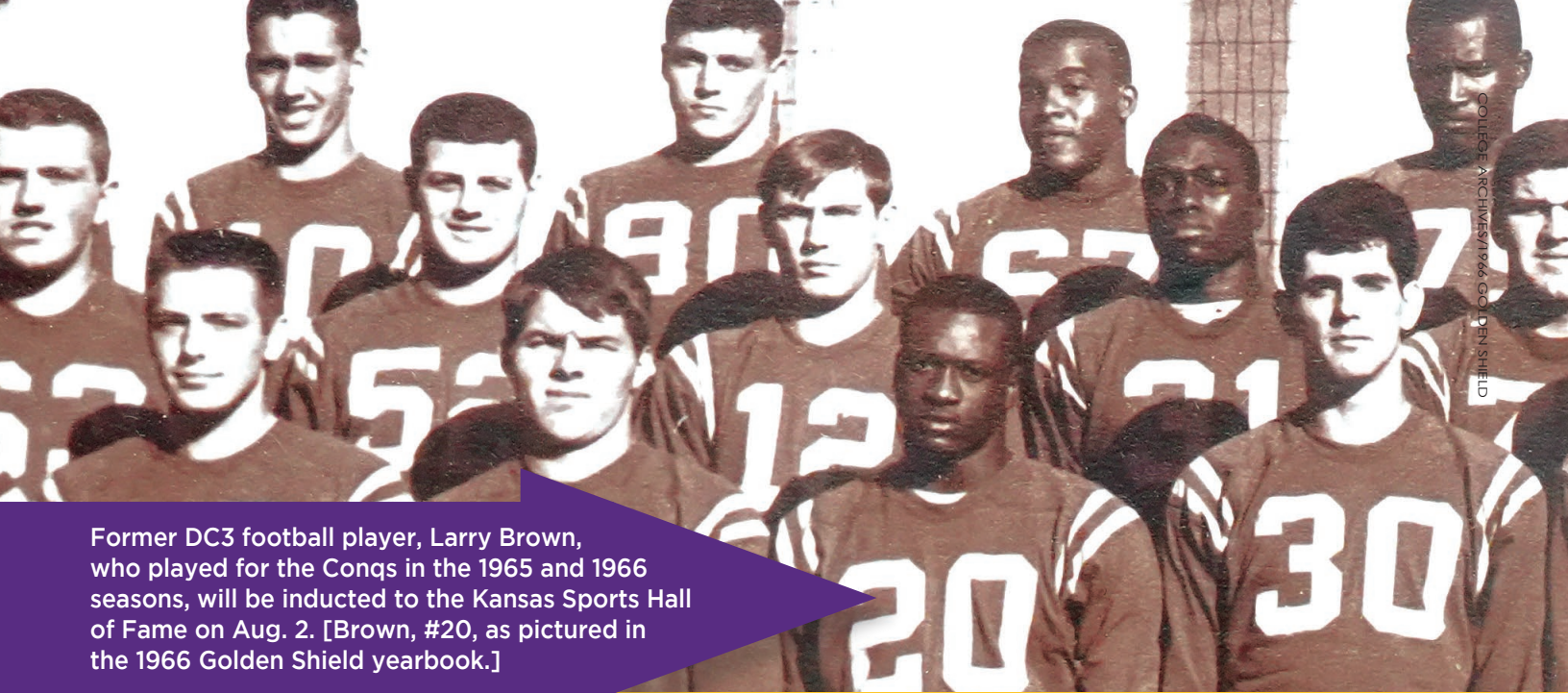
now for the last three years and won the championship each year.

The Advanced team competed at the Bandshell and put together some strong performances posting a score of 87.3833 on Day One and finishing on Day Two with an 88.5583 score to finish in second place.

The Conqs capped another year with a strong showing in Daytona Beach at the NCA National Championships. They also competed in the first-ever NJCAA Invitational and took second in that event. ■



THE 2024-2025 CONQUISTADOR SPIRIT SQUAD. Pictured (left to right, front row) are Clara Martinez, soph., Midland, Texas; Angelina Golub, fresh., South Windsor, Conn.; Ava Zapata, soph., Pasadena, Texas; Madison Vogel, soph., San Angelo, Texas; Juan Rodriguez, fresh., Harlandale, Texas; Stephanie Ortega, fresh., Dodge City; Lexi Hunt, soph., Colorado Springs, Colo.; Kierstin Lindseth, fresh., Haysville, Kan.; Teanna Beckham, soph., Parker, Colo.; (second row) Rebecca Cleary, fresh., Sydney, New South Wales, Australia; Brooklyn Kopp, fresh., McKinney, Texas; Jayci Galindo, soph., Amarillo, Texas; Zienna Kaiser, fresh., Loveland, Colo.; Jaycee Truax, fresh., Amarillo, Texas; Erin Hall, soph., Colorado Springs, Colo.; Kristina Markos-Williamson, soph., Rowley, Mass.; Samantha Alaniz, soph., Gonzales, Texas; Ada Mishkind, fresh., Littleton, Colo.; (third row) Michaela Mink, soph., Dodge City; Mariah McKillop, fresh., Centennial, Colo.; Catrena Graham, fresh., Bent Mountain, Va.; Tayler Petrikat, soph., Pearland, Texas; Casidy Ary, fresh., Lewis, Kan.; California Cedro, fresh., Minooka, Ill.; Zoey Giessel, fresh., Minneola, Kan.; Brooklyn Bolte, soph., Assaria, Kan.; Baylee Vaughn, fresh., Buda, Texas; (fourth row) Christian Lugo, soph., Attleboro, Mass.; Troy Larner, fresh., Colorado Springs, Colo.; Brandt Berryman, soph., Amarillo, Texas; Camdyn Cunningham, fresh., Ashland, Kan.; Brandon Billingsley, soph., Colorado Springs, Colo.; Summer Simpson, fresh., Wollert, Victoria, Australia; Ryan Larner, soph., Colorado Springs, Colo.; and William Hernandez, soph., Rowley, Mass.



Former DC3 football player, Larry Brown, who played for the Conqs in the 1965 and 1966 seasons, will be inducted to the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame on Aug. 2. [Brown, #20, as pictured in the 1966 Golden Shield yearbook.]

Former Conq Selected for Hall of Fame

Kansas Sports Hall of Fame Inducts Larry Brown

by Mike Smith

One of the most notable former Dodge City football players in program history has been selected as an honoree in the 2025 Kansas Sports Hall of Fame class that will be inducted in Topeka, Kan., on Aug. 2.

Former Conquistador, Larry Brown who was the 1972 NFL MVP for the Washington Redskins has been announced as part of the 10-member 2025 Kansas Sports Hall of Fame class.

The Pennsylvania native found his way to Kansas to play for the Conquistadors on the gridiron for the 1965 and 1966 seasons. During his sophomore season as a Conq, he would earn All-KJCCC first-team honors along with NJCAA honorable mention All-American honors. In 1966, he helped the Conqs to a 6-3-1 record and a tie for third place in the KJCCC.

After his time in Dodge City, Brown went on to start at Kansas State University from 1967-1968, leading the Wildcats in rushing in 1968. He was taken in the eighth round of the 1969 NFL/AFL draft as the 191st overall pick by the Washington Redskins, now Washington Commanders.

Brown spent his entire eight-year career playing in Washington, after being noticed and drafted by all-time great, Vince Lombardi. Brown earned

a Pro Bowl selection his rookie season after rushing for 888 yards and four touchdowns to go with 302 receiving yards. In total, Brown was named to the Pro Bowl team in each of his first four seasons in the league. Just one year later, in 1970, Brown became the first player in Washington history to rush for more than 1,000 yards in a campaign where he led the league in rushing with 1,125 yards to earn himself First-Team All-Pro honors.

Brown followed his 1970 season with Second-Team All-Pro honors in 1971, only to be named the 1972 NFL MVP a year later thanks to 1,216 yards on the ground despite missing two games to injury. To this day, he is the only Kansas State football player to ever win the award. That same season, Brown led his Washington squad to a Super Bowl appearance where they lost to the "Perfect Season" Miami Dolphins by a score of 14-7.

When Brown retired from the NFL in 1976, he retired as the Washington Redskins' all-time leader in rushing yards (5,875) and touchdowns (55). To this day, the #43 is considered "untouchable" amongst the Washington organization, along with the likes of #7 (Joe Theismann) and #44 (John Riggins).

Brown was one of the first inductees to the DC3 Athletics Hall of Fame in 1986,

was named a distinguished alumnus in 1972, and adds to his list of recognition by being inducted to the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame. He was also part of the inaugural NJCAA Foundation Hall of Fame class in 2021 and has been inducted into the Washington Commanders Ring of Fame and Washington, D.C., Sports Hall of Fame. ■



Larry Brown, circa 1965.

From the Director's Desk: Standards of Excellence



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

My name is Michael Marino, and I write this after about two months into my dream job as Director of Foundation and Community Relations. I was born and raised in Dodge City, Kan., am a diabetic boxer, and I love my parents, two brothers, and three dogs. I believe that the standards in Dodge City and Dodge City Community College (DC3) prepared me to succeed in Chicago, and I am excited to be back home fundraising for my hometown's community college.

I graduated from Dodge City High School in 2014 after taking a few dual-credit classes at DC3. I applied to Ivy League schools across the country via Questbridge, an incredible and competitive scholarship program for "low-income, high-achieving" youth. Northwestern University (NU) near Chicago accepted me, and I was able to become the first in my family to graduate from college (early) in 2018 from the School of Communication with a Bachelor's in Communication Studies and a Focus on History.

The impact of philanthropy and scholarships has always been present in my life, as I was only able to attend NU due to the vote of confidence given to me by generous donors. I later worked

in NU's Foundation Relations Office, the Vice President's team for Alumni Relations and Development, and for the Principal Gifts and International team handling gifts of more than \$5 million. After about five years, I was proud to say I had my hand in assisting fundraising that topped \$6 billion in transformational support for Northwestern University and Chicago.

I have always wanted to be a decent student and a coachable fighter, and I have learned the value of listening and learning from every person in my time away from home. You may have heard, but the new Pope Leo XIV is from Chicago and said the following when addressing the crowd outside of Saint Peter's Basilica following his announcement: "I didn't come to impose, I came to learn and accompany." Of course, his job is much more high-stakes and global than mine. But, that quote has resonated with me very much so far as I grow accustomed to my new job in the community. My calendar has been packed with meetings to reintroduce myself to people all across town, and I will continue to commit to listening to the community's feedback on the direction of the college and the Foundation.

I did not have a guide to success at an Ivy League school, adjusting to being alone in Chicago, or as I navigated the lessons that come along with my early 20s in Evanston, Lakeview East, Pilsen, and Rogers Park. What I did have, however, were the standards and foundation that I had built in Dodge City. I survived Pre-Calculus with Mr. Lopez at DCHS, led the violas as first chair in Chamber Orchestra, and passed College Algebra at DC3 somehow. I have a permanent scar near my left eye that reminds me of holding my own in a 15-round sparring session with

a heavyweight while I was a junior at DCHS and weighed 115 pounds. I've danced as a chambelan in quinceañeras, I learned French at DCHS and used it in Paris, and overall had the incredible luck to be born in an incredibly historic and diverse town like Dodge City. I have seen my friends, family, and community thrive in Dodge City, and it has become my passion to bring them more resources, so they can continue to impact Dodge City, Southwest Kansas, the Great Plains, the United States, and the globe. The Standards of Excellence exemplified by people coming out of Dodge City prepare them for the world.

This is where this story takes a turn and becomes about you. What have you always wanted to see at DC3? Do you want to see our wonderful nursing program continue to be the best in Kansas and improve our local hospitals? Maybe you've heard of the outstanding students we have in our helicopter program at our location in Chandler, Ariz., and want to support our veteran military students there? How about a new stadium with your family's name on it for DC3's student-athletes to bring championships home? These are all projects similar to what I have already seen succeed in the "big city," and I am absolutely sure Dodge City residents have seen surrounding locations benefit from new buildings and businesses. It is my goal to bring more to my hometown, and I hope you will join me, my exemplary coworkers and senior leadership, and our outstanding students at DC3 on this journey forward. For now, please consider this question and my personal call to action: Why not Dodge? ■

Del Escritorio del Director: Estandares de Excelencia



ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

Mi nombre es Michael Marino, y escribo esto después de casi dos meses en el trabajo de mis sueños como director de la fundación y relaciones con la comunidad. Nací y crecí en Dodge City, Kansas, soy un boxeador diabético, y amo a mis papás, mis dos hermanos y mis tres perros. Yo creo que los estándares de excelencia criados en Dodge City y DC3 me prepararon para tener éxito en Chicago, y estoy emocionado de estar en casa recaudando fondos para el colegio comunitario de mi pueblo natal.

Me gradué de Dodge City High School en 2014 después de tomar clases de doble crédito en el colegio. Apliqué a varias escuelas de liga de hiedra en los Estados Unidos por Questbridge, un programa de becas increíble y muy competitivo para niños de “bajos ingresos, altos logros.” Northwestern University (NU) cerca de Chicago me aceptó, y pude hacerme el primero en mi familia a graduarse del colegio en 2018 de la escuela de comunicación con mi licenciatura en artes de comunicación y un enfoque en historia.

El impacto de la filantropía y las becas siempre ha sido presente en mi vida, desde que pude atender NU solo

consiguiendo el voto de confianza que me dieron mis donadores. Después de graduarme, trabajé en la oficina de la fundación de NU, luego en el equipo del vice presidente para relaciones con alumnos, y finalmente en la oficina de regalos principales monitoreando los regalos de al menos \$5 millón. Después de cinco años, tuve orgullo de poder decir que tuve mi parte en recaudar fondos que pasaron \$6 billones en soporte transformacional para Northwestern University y Chicago.

Siempre he querido ser un estudiante bueno y un peleador que se ajusta rápidamente, y he aprendido el valor de escuchar y aprender de cada persona desde que me fui de casa. A lo mejor has escuchado, pero el nuevo Papa viene de Chicago y tuvo esto que decir a su audiencia afuera de la basílica de San Pedro: “no vine a imponer. Vine a aprender y acompañar.” Obviamente, su trabajo tiene mucho más en juego y es más global que el mío. Pero, esas palabras han resonado conmigo mucho en lo que me acostumbro a mi trabajo nuevo en la comunidad. Mi calendario ha estado lleno de juntas para reintroducirme a personas en toda la ciudad, y voy a continuar a escuchar los pensamientos de la comunidad sobre la dirección del colegio y la fundación.

Yo no tuve un guía para el éxito en una escuela de liga de hiedra, para ajustarme a estar solo en Chicago, ni para navegar las lecciones aprendidas que vinieron de mi tiempo en Evanston, Lakeview East, Pilsen, y Rogers Park. Sin embargo, lo que sí tuve fueron los estándares de excelencia y la fundación que me proporcionó Dodge City. Sobreviví la clase de Pre-Calculus con el profesor López en DCHS, guíe las violas siendo primer silla para la orquesta, y de alguna manera pude pasar College Algebra aquí en DC3. Tengo una cicatriz

cerca de mi ojo a la izquierda que me sirve como un recuerdo de una sesión de sparring de 15 rondas con un peleador de peso pesado que completé cuando estaba en mi tercer año en la high school y yo pesaba 115 libras. He bailado como un chambelán en quinceañeras, aprendí francés en DCHS y lo usé en París, y arriba de todo tuve la suerte increíble de ser nacido en un pueblo tan histórico y diverso como Dodge City. He visto a mis amigos, familia y comunidad tener éxito en Dodge City, y ahora es mi pasión recaudar fondos para que puedan seguir impactando Dodge City, el suroeste de Kansas, el área de las grandes llanuras, los Estados Unidos y el planeta. Los estándares de excelencia ejemplificados por cualquier persona saliendo de Dodge City te preparan para el mundo.

Aquí es donde esta historia cambia de curso y empieza a ser de usted – ¿qué has querido ver tú en DC3? ¿Quieres que nuestro programa de enfermería siga siendo el mejor en Kansas y que mejore a los hospitales locales? ¿Quizás has oído hablar de nuestro programa de volar helicópteros en Chandler, Arizona, y quieres apoyar a nuestros estudiantes que son veteranos militares allí? ¿Qué tal un estadio nuevo con el nombre de tu familia para que nuestros atletas traigan campeonatos a casa? Todos estos son proyectos similares a los que ya he visto tener éxito en la “gran ciudad”, y estoy absolutamente seguro de que los residentes de Dodge City han visto cómo las ciudades cercanas se han beneficiado de nuevos edificios y negocios. Mi objetivo es traer más progreso a mi ciudad natal, y espero que te unas a mí, a mis compañeros de trabajo y líderes ejemplares, y a nuestros destacados estudiantes de DC3 en este camino hacia adelante. Por ahora, por favor, considera esta pregunta y mi llamado personal a la acción: ¿Por qué no Dodge? ■

Alumnus Brings Global Experience to Chiropractic

by Michael Marino

Dr. Zach Harvey was born and raised in Dodge City, Kan., and he is proud to be a part of his family's three-generation educational legacy at Dodge City Community College (DC3).

DC3 has always been a second home to Harvey, as he spent many of his early years visiting his father's office, where his father, Brian, worked as an athletic trainer for many years.

Harvey was an engaged athlete during his time at Dodge City High School and DC3, making an impact on his teammates in football, soccer, softball, and baseball. He graduated from DCHS in 2010 and from DC3 in 2012 with an Associate of Science degree in Biological Sciences.

"Success to me is being able to make a positive impact on my community, provide for my family, and be able to have the freedom to spend time with my family."

—Zach Harvey, '12

While studying at Cleveland Chiropractic College in Overland Park, Kan., he met his future wife, Serina.

After Zach and Serina graduated in 2016, they decided to immediately expand their horizons and accept roles as chiropractors in Arequipa, Peru.

Over the next three years, the Harveys practiced their craft and completely immersed themselves in the language and culture of Arequipa, learning to speak Spanish fluently.

After a short stint as USD 443 substitute teachers, the Harveys opened Arrowhead Family Chiropractic in October 2020. This past May, they hosted a ribbon cutting for their new facilities, located at 11150 Kliesen St., Suite A, off U.S. Highway 50.

Harvey credits his time at DC3 with teaching him the skills necessary for future success, how to be an engaged member of his community, and how to later flourish as a doctor.



COURTESY PHOTO

Serina and Zach Harvey and their three young sons (left to right) Joyner, Damian, and Priest, who keep them busy and engaged in the Dodge City community.

Now that he has returned to the Dodge City area, he wants to give back to his hometown by launching "a system of clinics that will be able to provide quality bilingual chiropractic care to not only Dodge City, but all of Southwest Kansas."

Who made an impact on your life at DC3?

"My advisor, the late Michael Williams. He was instrumental in ensuring that I knew all of the prerequisites necessary

to begin on the path to becoming a chiropractor. I knew I wanted to do it after graduating from DC3, but his knowledge and support made that possible," he said.

"Another professor who I admired and made a huge impact would be the late Dr. Hala Amawi," Harvey said. "She taught Anatomy & Physiology, and taught so well and so enthusiastically that you had no choice but to learn the material. I honestly thought that graduate school A&P was almost easy after taking her class!" ■

Making the Most of DC3 Opportunities

by Michael Marino

Amy Soberanes is a proud Conquistador twice over and an active member of the Dodge City community.

A 2020 graduate of Dodge City High School, Soberanes continued her educational journey at Dodge City Community College (DC3), where she earned her Associate of Arts in Business Degree in 2022 and, most recently, a Certificate in Electrical Technology as a member of the Class of 2025.

Soberanes may be a familiar face to many as she was a member of the debate and track and field teams at DCHS and the academic Honor Rolls at DC3. Her story is one of perseverance and initiative, where she took advantage of each available opportunity in order to become a first-generation college graduate.

Her passion for DC3 is immediately apparent, and she's quick to share how the college has provided her with invaluable opportunities to learn from others and grow through their mentorship.

“True success is achieved when you can use your experiences, resources, and growth to help others rise. When you reach a point where you’re able to give back and create opportunities for others, that’s when your success becomes truly meaningful and complete.”

—Amy Soberanes, '22

Soberanes said she chose DC3 as “an intentional choice to not take the more traditional route,” embracing every opportunity to connect with community members, explore the many scholarship options available to students like her, and build a lasting legacy that others in her community can be inspired to follow.

She continues to seek out new challenges and wants to pass the knowledge and wisdom from these experiences along to others.



“Success, to me, means having the ability to support and uplift the people who matter most in my life, while continuously growing both personally and professionally,” she said. “It’s not just about reaching my own goals, but also about bringing others up with me—especially those who are in the same place I once was.”

DC3 continues to create opportunities to become more engaged with its exemplary students, alumni, and teachers in the community.

Soberanes is an outstanding example of an alumna who the college is proud to stand behind, as she continues to grow in her career. She has overcome obstacles in her life to become a first-generation college graduate from DC3, and we congratulate her on her latest achievement.

Currently, she is completing an internship with Koch Fertilizer here in Dodge City and plans to remain in the area to continue building her career.

Who made an impact on your life at DC3?

“Individuals like Jason Lutz, Bennie Wiley-Bethea, Melanie Smith, Sheila Pineda, and Paulina Duenas went above and beyond... They not only supported my academic journey, but also helped shape the person I am today,” she said. “They saw my potential, believed in me, and invested their time and energy into my success. Their encouragement and dedication made all the difference, and I will carry their influence with me for the rest of my life.” ■

ALBA GUTIERREZ-ORTIZ

DC3 Foundation Donors

Make an Impact in Your Community!

by Michael Marino

These generous donors gave to the Dodge City Community College (DC3) Foundation from Nov. 11, 2024, to May 26, 2025. Totaling more than \$143,000 over that time period, including donations for scholarships, projects, Foundation general fund, DC3 Rodeo Auction, DC3 employee donations, and memorials.

You, too, can make a difference and be a partner for student success with the DC3 Foundation! ■

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This form may be mailed in the postage-paid envelope included with this issue or sent by email to alumni@dc3.edu.



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Just One More

DC3 faculty, staff, and students joined Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Center on May 22, to help celebrate the school's last day of class with a hands-on field day that introduced young learners to calf roping and early STEM concepts.

Pictured are rodeo student-athlete Jackson Guoan, a sophomore from Tawas City, Mich., and a Bright Beginnings student who is learning how to rope.



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