



▶ **THREE LONG-TIME LTC EMPLOYEES RETIRING**



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▶ **LTC STUDENTS GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY**

LINCOLN TRAIL COLLEGE *Network*



LTC BREAKS GROUND ON THEATER RENAISSANCE PROJECT

Lincoln Trail College broke ground on an addition to the Zwermann Arts Center at a ceremony on December 1.

“This is obviously a very, very momentous, important occasion for Lincoln Trail College,” said Interim President Roger Eddy in his opening remarks.

The expansion to the Zwermann Arts Center will add a new choral room that doubles as a mid-sized lecture hall. It also includes additional practice rooms, an office, and storage space.

“This is going to be a wonderful addition to the campus,” said Lincoln Trail College Foundation Executive Director Rod Harmon. “We use the theater a lot for our fundraisers and we’re looking forward to see the new structure.”

Bill Thomas from the LTC Foundation also spoke during the ceremony. “One thing I want to say is that the Zwermann Arts Center and the programs put on here are a terrific conduit between this community, the whole county, and the college.

See the complete groundbreaking ceremony on YouTube.
Watch the LTTV video:
<http://www.youtube.com/LincolnTrailCollege>

More people come out here because of this, other than students, than any other reason.”

Money for the project came through donations and Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Chancellor Dr. Ryan Gower recognized some of the key contributors. “For those of you who are not aware, as you look at a lot of the growth that has taken place at Lincoln Trail College over the past four years it’s because of the generous support of the Lincoln Trail College Foundation. And in a lot of ways the support of Gladys Jones who gave us a significant gift from her estate.”

Gower said he’s excited about what this project represents. “This expansion is the first brick and mortar construction at Lincoln Trail since 1975. That’s growth. But more important than the growth that this building physically represents, I want you to know how excited I am to see the growth at Lincoln Trail College and all the other ways as I look at the people who are here. Over the past four years I’ve seen our faculty embrace new modalities new technology, new ways of reaching our students. That’s growth. I’ve seen our faculty and staff re commit themselves to finding ways to build relationships with high schools, enroll students, help students persist, help students graduate and attain their professional goals. That’s growth. So as excited as I am about the building a much more excited by what it represents which is the fact that Lincoln Trail College has got a new mindset that we’re thinking to the future and we’re growing to the future.”

Sitework for the project is already underway. The construction of the new 3600 square foot addition should be complete in the early summer of 2021.



Hershey presents the Perfect Pitch Committee a \$4000 check for the project. (L to R): Robert Quick, Yvonne Newlin, Roger Eddy, Robbie Nethery, Rod Harmon, Rebecca Carmack, Barb Shimer, Tom Moore.



Architect Sandra Walk (center) works with Rebecca Carmack, Barb Shimer, Chris Forde and John Watson to help pick interior colors and finishes for the Theater Renaissance Project.



A worker begins the demolition on the Performing Arts Center to prepare for the Theater Renaissance construction project.



The east awning of the Performing Arts Center is removed on the first day of demolition of the Theater Renaissance project.

THREE LONG-TIME LTC EMPLOYEES RETIRE

The end of 2020 will mark the end of the careers of three Lincoln Trail College employees' careers. Deanna Chrysler, Julie Higginbotham, and Vicky Bonelli have combined for over 90 years of experience at the college.



DEANNA CHRYSLER

"I fell in love with the environment and I didn't want to leave," says Deanna Chrysler, the Administrative Assistant to the President. After spending 35 years with Lincoln Trail College, Chrysler retired in November.

She started her time at Lincoln Trail College with a work-study position in 1985 and was hired as a full-time employee in June of '88 after graduating from LTC. In her time, she worked with nine different presidents and several deans.

"I grew up here and so did my children. The idea of life-long learning is very exciting to me. It's been great working with all of the faculty and staff and students and seeing all of the changes."

Change is one of the things that happened to her when she was a student. Chrysler says when she started at LTC, she was shy and intimidated. She was the only student enrolled in one of her classes and it got canceled. She didn't know what to do, but her adviser helped her find another class. "That support made a world of difference."

She says she's always tried to keep that in mind in her job. "Part of our mission is about making a difference in the lives of students as well as our faculty and staff. I've always wanted to be able to help."

The community has been a big part of Chrysler's time at LTC. She says the Celebrate Art! Event is one of her most cherished things at the college. The program not only gives local students a chance to showcase their art, but it also serves as an educational workshop for them. Each year the event brings in a keynote artist to talk about their work and their process. Most of the speakers have been local artists, which is important to Chrysler.

She's also been instrumental in a pair of events that attract many community members to the college: Trick or Treat at the Trail and Santa Day/Breakfast with Santa. Trick or Treat at the Trail brings in over 2000 residents each year, giving them a fun and safe environment for trick or treating. Santa Day started with a series of craft events and the opportunity for kids to meet Santa Claus and transitioned to Breakfast with Santa which includes a chance to meet Santa, breakfast, and a show. "These have always been near and dear to my heart. They're such fun events."

Chrysler says she'll split her time between Illinois and Texas in retirement. She's planning to work on her art more and paint more and she wants to spend more time with her children and grandchildren.

JULIE HIGGINBOTHAM

After spending more than 30 years with Lincoln Trail College, Assistant Dean of Student Services Julie Higginbotham will retire at the end of 2020.

While Higginbotham didn't start full-time with LTC until July of 1988, she got her first taste of working for the college in a work-study position in the Records Office in 1985. Eventually, she worked part-time in the business office before moving to Admissions and Records full-time. She transitioned to the Assistant Dean of Student Services in 2017.

Higginbotham says she's seen a lot of change over her time at LTC, including changing how records were processed. "When I first started, everything was still being done by hand. We would process all of our records on paper and by hand. We started doing more and more by computer and now that's how we handle all of our applications."

One of the things she says she'll miss is the comradery she's had with her coworkers over the years. "I have a lot of great memories with faculty and staff. There are people like Debbie Kuhl in Financial Aid. There was never a dull moment with her. Liz Grant was a hoot. I've known Becky [Mikeworth] for 25 years and she's always fun. I've enjoyed what I do and who I work with. That's been what's kept me in place for a long time."



She's worked with a lot of students during her career and she says it's always enjoyable to watch them graduate. "That's how we know we've done our job because we've helped them move to the next chapters in their lives."

Higginbotham says the fact she's retiring hasn't fully hit her yet, but she's already making plans. She's expecting a grandson in January and she plans to be a full-time grandmother by helping babysit. She also plans on doing a lot of gardening and helping her husband around the farm. She says she's looking forward to a stress-free life.

"I know I'm going to miss Lincoln Trail," says Higginbotham. "I'm definitely going to miss the people and I'm going to miss the students."



VICKY BONELLI

In her 18 years as the Director of the Learning Resource Center, Vicky Bonelli says she's seen some changes in not only how the library works, but also how classes are offered at Lincoln Trail College.

"When I started, we had telecourses for distance learning. We were mailing 10-to-20 video cassettes to people and then they'd come to campus so we could proctor tests. That's all been replaced by hybrid and online classes."

She says there have been a lot of changes in technology too. "We used to have carts with a TV and VCR that we would wheel from class to class when an instructor wanted to show a video. I've also seen book circulation decrease. There's more information available online."

She says joining CARLI has been very helpful to students. "That gives us access to 90 colleges in Illinois and 36-million items through interlibrary loan. It also means access to many databases too. CARLI makes sure that our students have access to college-level materials."

Bonelli says one of the perks of her job has been watching people grow. “I’ve really enjoyed watching our work-study and part-time employees find full-time work and knowing that we helped in their path.”

Another aspect of the job that Bonelli enjoyed has been helping with community education. She says they’ve tried to offer community education classes for people of all ages, including things like karate, swimming lessons, crochet, and dog obedience. “It is a great way for people to take a class that may not want to take a full-semester class. Having a class that helps with a hobby or is something fun is very important.”

She says she’s also really enjoyed community events like Trick or Treat at the Trail, Celebrate Art!, and speaker and author visits that happened over the years.

Now that she is retiring, Bonelli says she’ll spend more time with hobbies like gardening and cooking. She says she’s also looking forward to spending more time with her dogs and she hopes to be able to travel more.

“What I’ll miss the most is the staff and faculty. It’s been a lot of fun and I’ve learned a lot. I’ve also enjoyed helping people answer questions and helping them with a book or find something online.”



Students in Carrie Brown's Leadership Development class helped clean LTC's Performing Arts props loft.



Students from Tona Ambrose's Leadership Development class work on a community service project with the Nutrition on Weekends program.



Students in Tona Ambrose's Leadership Development program go through mock interviews with LTC personnel.



About 60 Leadership Development students watch November's IECC Board of Trustees meeting for class.

MIAMI HEAT TALK DIGITAL MARKETING WITH SPORT MANAGEMENT



Miami Heat Mobile Content Manager Payal Doshi (left) and Miami Heat Interactive Marketing Content Manager Kristen Figarola (right) speak via Zoom to Tyler Browning's Sport Communications class.

Lincoln Trail College prides itself on making sure that students get the opportunity to hear from experts in their fields. That's no different in Tyler Browning's Sport Communications class in the Sport Management program. He recently brought two speakers from the Miami Heat to his classroom via a Zoom teleconference.

Payal Doshi is the Miami Heat's Mobile Content Manager and works with the team's mobile app. Kristen Figarola is the Heat's Interactive Marketing Content Manager. She works with the team's social media. This is the second year where the two joined Browning's class to talk about their experiences and give students advice.

"I really want to make sure that my students get the chance to talk with leaders in their fields," says Browning. "One of the great things about technologies like Zoom is that we're able to bring in speakers from all over the country."

Doshi and Figarola talked about what they do for the Heat and how they got to where they are now. "Internships are super important," says Figarola. "My first two [internships] weren't really in sports. They weren't geared to sports at all, but those internships were super helpful, and I feel kind of got me my internship with the Heat. I learned a little bit about social media and ultimately you kind of learn how to just communicate and deal with different people and different personalities which is also a super important part and role in any of your jobs. Obviously now I have a focus in sports, but I really learned from how to communicate and dealing with different teams obviously from all of those internships. It was a different interaction, but you really learn from that. And those two past internships I think really helped me nail my Miami Heat internship. And obviously you know my internship turned into a manager role."

Figarola talked to the class about how she selects content for each of the team's social media platforms for game days and non-game days. She explained how they use analytics to judge the performance of different content and how that's used to build future content.

Doshi's role is similar, but she says the team app also offers many differences because of how it integrates many different things in one place. She says users of the app will find things like highlights and player profiles. The Heat also

uses push notifications with the app to showcase an extremely exciting highlight or something like a live stream of a press conference.

In addition to fielding questions about their jobs from Browning, the two women also fielded questions from students during the 45-minute-long session. They also gave the students advice for starting careers in sport.

“I would say first and foremost apply to as many internships as you can,” says Figarola. “It took me five times to even get an email back [from the Heat]. Being patient and kind of you know trucking through it is super important. And I would also say once you kind of get your foot in the door find opportunities. I think the biggest thing that’s helped me grow is finding opportunities or finding cracks that need to be filled. And that’s how I’ve grown.”

“I would say as much as you are patient you should also be persistent to follow your goals to follow your passion,” says Doshi. “I had numerous internships throughout my career, and I learned a lot. But I also feel like you shouldn’t sell yourself short either and you should get paid for what you are doing as well. I’m all about creating your own experiences as well. If someone’s not going to provide you with that opportunity show them you can do it. There are now more than ever so many different ways in which you can create content. And so, you should really think about leveraging those avenues. It’s as simple as taking your iPhone and if you want to be on air kind of doing your reps yourself learn how to edit and learn the back end of social media. If you want to produce, there’s so many ways in which you can do that. And there’s so many tools online that also allow you to also help you to get to where you want to go. And I guess I would also say really develop your network and it’s OK to message someone on LinkedIn and ask them about their journey ask them about their experiences. And I’m sure for the most part they’ll be willing to share insight and really help and leverage your next path or whatever that will be do too.”

In the last three year’s Browning’s students have had numerous opportunities to hear from speakers through in-class and co-curricular experiences. Students have heard from representatives from the St. Louis Cardinals, Chicago White Sox, and Chicago Blackhawks as well as the University of Illinois, Clemson University, and Eastern Illinois University. They also traveled to DePauw University to hear from the founder of ESPN. Browning says he’s continuing to look for new opportunities for his students to hear from speakers and grow their personal networks.



Lincoln Trail College LHP Keegan Gagliardo committed to Illinois State University.



Lincoln Trail College F Jazmyn Ingersoll committed to Trevecca Nazarene University.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Construction projects become real when certain things start to happen. Drawings and blueprints are one thing, committee meetings aimed at choosing carpet, wall, floor, and trim colors and materials are quite another. Then, of course, there is the demolition and groundbreaking ceremony. This series of real events have taken place over the past couple of weeks and certainly make the addition to the Performing Arts Center real. Thanks to Barb Shimer, Rebecca Carmack, John Watson, and Chris Forde for serving on a committee to choose carpet, wall colors, floor, and trim. There will be many more choices to come but we are off to a great start. Demolition took place a couple of weeks earlier than expected and the groundbreaking ceremony was a small gathering simply intended to commemorate the start of a very significant project at Lincoln Trail. It has been decades since a brick and mortar project here and there is definitely excitement surrounding the addition.

At the end of December, Lincoln Trail will once again say goodbye to long time employees. Julie Higginbotham and Vicky Bonelli are both retiring at the end of December. Julie is leaving after 32 years at LTC, most recently Assistant Dean of Student Services and Vicky has been the Director of the Learning Resource Center for 18 years. Combined this represents a half-century of institutional knowledge lost to LTC. Institutional knowledge is tough to replace. However, Vicky and Julie, along with Deanna Chrysler (who retired last month after 33 years at LTC) represent the loss of well over one-hundred years of “institutional passion”. They all loved LTC and worked hard to make improvements for the betterment of students. We wish Julie and Vicky the very best in retirement. They will be missed.

Since our return to campus after the Thanksgiving holiday break, students have been on remote learning. With the recent rise in COVID cases pre-Thanksgiving, and the concerns related to travel it is understandable that students did not return for in-person learning. The fact that the fall semester was held until this point with in-person learning is a testament to the planning and implementation of health and safety procedures. These steps took lots of time and hard work. The faculty and staff here at LTC did a great job of planning and implementing these precautionary measures, as well as dealing with students and staff members who tested positive. The number of meals prepared and served to students isolated or quarantined was indeed impressive.

No matter what the spring semester might bring, the staff has been tested and passed with flying colors. There is no doubt whatever the challenges the new semester has in store, the challenge will once again be met by a dedicated faculty and staff.

In closing, I want to sincerely wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Roger Eddy
Interim President

