Welcome

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of State College of Florida Foundation, welcome to our new “Inspire” magazine. In this edition, we have featured why we are ‘Still the One’ highlighting our mission of connecting donors’ passions and regional partners with State College of Florida’s outstanding students, faculty and programs. We are extremely proud of our stewardship of foundation assets consistent with donors’ intent.

Thanks to You...last year’s impact and results are:
• $1.4 million was dispersed to over 900 deserving scholarship recipients.
• $1.3 million was provided to the College for equipment, faculty and program enhancements.

These accomplishments are because of You—our loyal donors.

Since its inception in 1957, the State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota, has been committed to enhancing the lives of our area residents. Because of You, State College of Florida and the SCF Foundation have been able to realize the community’s dream of an accessible, affordable and high-quality education right here in Manatee and Sarasota counties.

Our vision is to double our endowment to help remove financial obstacles for all deserving students who want to improve their lives with a State College of Florida education. With your help, we will continue to contribute to the vitality of our community and expand innovative, academic enhancements at the College to make it the best educational experience in the region.

Thanks to YOU...We are SCF!

Cassandra Holmes, Executive Director
SCF Accomplishments

For the first time in SCF’s history, the Brain Bowl Fire team, including SCF students Michael Moore, Naim Chowdhury, Leon Hostetler and Austin Goode and SCF Collegiate School students Kara Stevens and Carlyle Styer, won the 2015 National Community College Championship Tournament and defeated prestigious institutions—Duke University, Claremont Colleges and University of California, Berkeley—in the 2015 Intercollegiate Championship Tournament. The Fire Team also won the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) State Tournament, breaking defending champion Chipola College’s winning streak of seven consecutive FCSAA state tournament wins. Michael Moore and Naim Chowdhury were named FCSAA All-Tournament players, and Coach Christina Dwyer was presented with the FCSAA Brain Bowl Coach of the Year Award.

SCF student Leon Hostetler and adjunct faculty member Robert Shollar won a Best Presentation Award at the Kappa Mu Epsilon 40th Biennial Convention/Central Florida Undergraduate Mathematics Conference at Embry-Riddle University. Melinda Geisel and Yantong Chen came in second and fourth in an Integration Bee Contest at the conference. SCF was the only two-year school to compete. SCF Math Olympics Gamma team members also won fourth place at the statewide competition.

PTK members Constanza Lanata Gustaf, Alexis Holsapple, Brandie Hyde and Megan Orlando were named to the 2015 All-Florida Academic Team for their academic achievement, leadership and service to the community. They were recognized at an awards ceremony in Tallahassee.
SCF music students won awards and scholarships at the Florida College System Activities Association Winter Music Symposium at the University of North Florida Jacksonville. Emily Champagne, violin, won first place in the Student Artist Competition string category and was featured in the artist concert at the symposium. SCF also represented eight of the 16 All-State Orchestra musicians at the symposium. The following students participated in master classes and received Honorable Mention: Christopher Leiper, trumpet, brass category; Brad McDade, clarinet, woodwind category; and Bit Risner, jazz trumpet, jazz category. In addition, Katelyn Priest, soprano, and Jade Turner, mezzo-soprano, were selected to participate in voice master classes. Marc Mannino, SCF Director of Jazz Studies, organized the Music Symposium All-State Jazz Band, and Rex Willis, SCF Director of Guitar and Composition, conducted the Music Symposium All-State Guitar Ensemble.

SCF Manatees Tennis team ranked third in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Women’s Tennis Championship in Tucson, Ariz. The team won the FCSAA State/NJCAA Region 8 Championship in Altamonte Springs, marking the first time an SCF women’s team has won back-to-back state championships. Natella Nabieva, Sarah Peek, Amiena Houston, Mikala Lowrance and Casey O’Toole received All-State honors. Nabieva also was named FCSAA Player of the Year, and Coach Clayton Taylor was named the FCSAA Coach of the Year.

Athletics Highlights

- Volleyball team ranked ninth in the nation, runner-up in the FCSAA state tournament and first in the Suncoast Conference.
- Baseball team placed second in the Suncoast Conference, qualifying for the FCSAA state tournament for the 20th consecutive season—a state record.
- Softball team qualified for the state tournament for the 15th consecutive year and won the Suncoast Conference Championship.

Tennis team members Amiena Houston, Casey O’Toole, Natella Nabieva, Miranda Talbert, Mikala Lowrance and Sarah Peek.

SCF Model UN team members (front row) Anne Miller, Carolina Montes, Carlyle Styer, Kristen Moreno and Jordan Foth (back row) Matthew Ruch, George Vasquez and Team Advisor Danny Fuerstman.

For the first time in SCF’s history, the Model United Nations team won the Outstanding Delegation Award, the top honor given at the 25th annual Southern Regional Model United Nations Conference in Charlotte, N.C. representing China in a range of committees from the General Assembly to INTERPOL to the Security Council, the SCF delegation also received the Best Position Paper. SCF students received a perfect score on four out of the five submitted position papers, earning a team average of 99.4%, possibly the highest in the conference’s 25-year history. SCF Venice student Anne Miller won an Outstanding Delegate Award for her work on the African Development Bank, and Carlyle Styer, won an Outstanding Delegate Award for his work on the UN Security Council.
As President of the State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota, there is nothing I enjoy more than sharing the successes of our students with the community. Since the vast majority of our students are from Manatee and Sarasota counties, their success is the community’s success. This bonds the community to our college and demonstrates a powerful return on investment for our donors through the State College of Florida Foundation.

We equally value the accomplishments of our alumni. Whether you transferred to another school with your Associates in Arts Degree, or went straight into the workforce with an Associates in Science Degree or Certificate, you are the embodiment of my belief that when you start at SCF, “you can get anywhere from here.” Wherever you end up, know that you will always have a place to return at SCF.

Dr. Carol Probstfeld was a featured speaker at the Sarasota Kiwanis Club Veterans Day Breakfast, which included a full program saluting veterans from all branches of the U.S. military. The breakfast raised money for the SCF Foundation’s Veterans Scholarship Fund.

Dr. Carol Probstfeld spent time with retired U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Jack Carter, who was the keynote speaker at the Sarasota Kiwanis Club Veterans Day Breakfast.

Dr. Carol Probstfeld and Cassandra Holmes welcomed the SCF Foundation Board of Directors Officers Chris Pfahler, Lisa Bristow and Cathy Kuhlman to the SCF Foundation Scholarship Luncheon.
Dr. Carol Probstfeld’s first priority is the success of SCF’s students, and she was so proud to cheer on the SCF Brain Bowl team to victory at the 2015 National Community College Championship Tournament in Atlanta.

Dr. Carol Probstfeld joined SCF Foundation Board President Chris Pfahler and SCF Foundation Executive Director Cassandra Holmes at the Spirit of Manatee Awards to honor R. Kemp Riechmann and Beverly Beall (center) for receiving the Leadership Spirit Award for their generous philanthropy and ongoing commitment to the youth of this community.

SCF Trustee Robert Wyatt and Dr. Carol Probstfeld posed with Mr. Wyatt’s purchase of her underwater photography artwork, which she donated to the SCF Foundation for Avenues des Artistes.

SCF Music Program Director Melodie Dickerson and Dr. Carol Probstfeld donned designer-named attire and walked the runway as education “celebrity models” to help raise money for SCF Foundation scholarships at the Palm-Aire Women’s Club Fashion Show.

Dr. Carol Probstfeld joined Hermitage Executive Director Bruce Rodgers, SCF Venice Campus Executive Officer Darlene Wedler-Johnson, SCF Foundation Executive Director Cassandra Holmes, SCF Foundation Director of Development Mary Lou Bale and SCF President Emeritus Dr. Sarah H. Pappas at the Hermitage Artist Retreat. They helped celebrate longtime Foundation supporter Annette Dignam with the Annette Dignam Hermitage/SCF Residency in Literature, which annually offers a writer of national stature a Hermitage residency that includes workshops and guest lectures at SCF.

Dr. Carol Probstfeld and Maverick the Manatee thanked SCF’s music students for their superior entertainment at the SCF Foundation’s fundraiser, Avenues des Artistes.
The College’s Nursing Program, established in 1959, was among the country’s first 30 community college nursing programs and the first in Florida to receive accreditation from the National League of Nursing. Funded by a grant from the Kellogg Foundation, the program admitted its first class of 27 students in Fall 1960 at MJC in Bradenton.

For the past 58 years, the College has continued its tradition of academic excellence to train and educate graduates for the workforce through programs that were developed in response to the needs of the local community. SCF Associate in Science (A.S.) in Nursing graduates consistently score above the state average on the national exam required to become a licensed registered nurse (RN). SCF’s degree programs, including the A.S. in Nursing and Bachelor of Science in Nursing, are approved by the Florida Board of Nursing and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing Inc. to ensure that graduates receive a stellar education. SCF’s quality faculty members not only impart to students their knowledge of nursing but also their passion for caring for patients.

Whether they graduated from State College of Florida, Manatee Community College or Manatee Junior College, highly qualified alumni who work as nurses and nurse practitioners have cared for residents in the region—from Tampa to DeSoto to Port Charlotte—in hospitals, out-patient facilities, doctors’ offices and patients’ homes.
A pivotal moment in the history of the College’s nursing program was in 2005 when the Bon Secours Venice Hospital Foundation donated $2.5 million to create an endowed chair in nursing and an endowed faculty/staff position in health sciences.

With matching funds from the state of Florida, the endowment increased to more than $4 million and was invested to ensure that the positions at MCC Venice were funded annually.

The timing of the gift could not have been more perfect for MCC, the Hospital Foundation or the community. The gift, which made it possible for MCC to expand the Venice nursing program and fill a critical nursing shortage in the community, was a lasting legacy for the former Bon Secours Venice Hospital Foundation, which dissolved when the hospital was sold to Health Management Associates and became Venice Regional Medical Center, now Venice Regional Bayfront Health.

Among the community members who played a role in the significant gift were Bob Ochs, former President of the Hospital Foundation Board; Mike Guley, former Bon Secours Venice Hospital Chief Executive Officer; Sister Mary Regina Flatley and Sister Mary Catherine Rogers, former Vice President for Sponsorship for the Sisters of the Bon Secours Health System; Mick Gardener, former President of the Bon Secours Hospital Board; Jack Meyerhoff, a former member of the hospital board and the MCC Foundation Board; and Dr. Jim Woods, former President of The Hospital Foundation and MCC Venice Campus Executive Officer.

"I love that the nursing program is at the Venice campus. I can't think of anything more important that Bon Secours could have done for this community than to have supported it in that way," Woods said. "What I'm most proud of is having a part in helping bring a gift to the college that funds nursing and health sciences positions in perpetuity. That's a legacy that most people don't get the opportunity to share."

Prior to the gift, the MCC Venice Nursing Program began in 2002 with 30 students and graduated its first class a year later. MCC nursing faculty members traveled from Bradenton to teach students in one small classroom. Faculty members shared an office in Venice, but they hauled their supplies, including medical mannequins, in their cars.

“We always joked that if the police ever pulled us over, we would be in trouble,” said Dawn Evancho, SCF Associate Professor of Nursing, who was one of a few original faculty and members to travel to the Venice campus to teach students.

"The Hospital Foundation gift was huge for the community because we were able to meet the needs of our students from Venice, North Port and Port Charlotte," she said. Thanks to the funding of other generous benefactors, nursing faculty members train students with the use of an eight-bed skills lab, a computer lab, and a nursing simulation lab. Students also regularly complete clinical rotations at Venice Regional Bayfront Health.

"Our graduates staff most of the local hospitals, so when my nursing students complete their clinicals they are working alongside registered nurses, many of whom are my former students," she said.

SCF alumnus Chris Langnes, a registered nurse in the stroke unit at Venice Regional Bayfront Health, mentors SCF students working on his floor during their hospital clinical rotations.

“I explain to students that it’s not just about putting in the time. It’s about performing so that hospital nurses see them as someone who is taking the initiative to learn and grow as a future nurse,” he said.
Today, a full continuum of education is available to health care professionals in the region starting with SCF’s A.S. in Nursing and Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees that were developed in response to the needs of the local community to the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree offered through a partnership with Florida State University.

SCF, a gold-level member of the Florida Healthcare Simulation Alliance (FHSA), also regularly hosts conferences and continuing education courses for health care professionals statewide at the Medical Technology and Simulation Center (MTSC), a regional training center for FHSA.

The MTSC, which opened in 2011 at SCF Lakewood Ranch, features an Intensive Care Unit with patient simulators, electronic medical records, a nurse call system, drug recognition system and medication-dispensing devices. MTSC’s risk-free, controlled, simulated environment provides SCF nursing students with opportunities to participate in collaborative training exercises with future doctors from the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and allows Florida health care professionals at conferences to learn best practices that improve patient safety and care in area hospitals.

Langnes, 60, has earned supervisors’ and students’ respect based on his life experiences and his success in graduating with his Nursing degree from SCF in 2014 and landing a job at the hospital.

A U.S. Army veteran and a former business owner in the construction industry, Langnes decided to pursue a nursing degree at SCF due to the economic downturn and his concern for getting injured later in life and being unable to work.

Enrolling in classes with younger students was at first intimidating and challenging, but he overcame his apprehension and realized that he offered a different perspective from his younger peers, and that has proven to be invaluable as a nurse.

“My professors always emphasized critical thinking, which is what I apply to my job now—understanding a situation and acting on it.”

“In my experience running a business, it was always about adapting to the situation. When something wasn’t working, I had to change it and go in a different direction. It’s the same thing with nursing. What I learned in nursing school was basic knowledge, but my professors always emphasized critical thinking, which is what I apply to my job now—understanding a situation and acting on it,” he said.

Langnes, who has thrived in the fast-paced hospital environment, is known as a kind, compassionate nurse who takes the time to communicate with patients to ensure that they fully understand their needs and have the best opportunity for recovery.

Langnes also is a student in SCF’s online Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program, and he isn’t stopping there.

“I’m not one of those people who sees myself retiring because I’m an active person. I plan to work as a nurse as long as I can,” he said.
SCF Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program—the area’s oldest and largest provider of education and training for legal support staff—celebrated its 40th Anniversary in the same way it began—with strong support from the legal community.

Established in 1974 as the second legal assistant training program in Florida, SCF’s Paralegal Program has offered an accessible and affordable education to paralegals as Manatee Junior College, Manatee Community College and SCF by partnering with the legal community to enhance students’ education with rich and meaningful experiences through mentoring, internships and job opportunities.

At the 40th Anniversary celebration, SCF Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program Manager Suzanne Bechtol welcomed more than 100 SCF administrators, paralegal faculty, advisory committee members, alumni, and paralegals and attorneys to celebrate the event hosted by the Suncoast Chapter of the Paralegal Association of Florida at Marina Jack in Sarasota.

Circuit Court Judge Charles E. Williams praised SCF’s Paralegal Program for its long history in meeting the area’s needs for skilled legal assistants.

“As a judge, I recognize the very important work you do to support attorneys by preparing paralegals in our community and look forward to the SCF Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program continuing for 40 years and beyond,” Williams said.

SCF alumna Stella Mason, a paralegal with Shapiro, Goldman, Babboni and Walsh, was the recipient of the Still the One Award for her contribution to SCF through the development of the college’s paralegal curriculum and service as an SCF adjunct instructor.

“SCF offers an excellent education to students because it has a pulse on the needs of the community. SCF professors were so giving and caring that I felt it was important to give back,” Mason said.

SCF alumni R. Stephen Rush, Kelly Wilkes and Pamlyn Taylor were recognized by Suzanne Bechtol for their roles in organizing the celebration.
President Dr. Carol Probstfeld thanks Betsy Nagelsen McCormack for her many contributions to the success of the SCF Tennis Program.

(Left to right) Penelope “Pencie” Huneke (daughter of Penelope “Nip” Anderson McBride), Betsy Nagelsen McCormack and Nick Bollettieri listen to the tennis court dedication ceremony.
For its national recognition, state championship titles, sportsmanship awards and, most of all, its stellar academic performance, State College of Florida Manatees Women’s Tennis team has earned the respect of some of the world’s most renowned tennis legends and enthusiasts.

At the SCF Foundation’s tennis court dedication ceremony, SCF’s neighbor and benefactor Nick Bollettieri, who has been active in the SCF Women’s Tennis Program since day one, praised Executive Head Coach Betsy Nagelsen McCormack for the success of the team since it began five years ago.

“SCF’s Tennis Program does so much more than teach tennis and the love of the game. It’s about character building and leadership, not about wins on the tennis court,” Bollettieri said.

At the ceremony, SCF Athletic Director Matt Ennis surprised McCormack and her team with state championship tournament rings.

“To share this moment with my family, friends, mentor Nick Bollettieri and SCF benefactors is overwhelming. I am proud of what the team has accomplished,” McCormack said.

Tennis courts at SCF Bradenton are named in honor of benefactors Betsy Nagelsen McCormack, Jim Nagelsen, Nick Bollettieri, Mary and Tom James, and Penelope “Nip” Anderson McBride.

“SCF’s Tennis Program does so much more than teach tennis and the love of the game. It’s about character building and leadership.”

Nick Bollettieri
Winning Smiles with a Big Heart and Caring Hands

Known in the community as a man with a big heart, the late Lawrence E. Ruf was a reserved, unassuming man with a bold, charitable passion to change the lives of the homeless and low-income families in the community by meeting their most basic needs.

Recognizing the importance of dental hygiene in preventing health problems among vulnerable populations, Ruf, a former Exxon Corporation accountant, continued his legacy through the caring hands of SCF dental hygiene students by designating a portion of his Lawrence E. Ruf Charitable Fund at the Manatee Community Foundation for the SCF Dental Hygiene Program.

The fund, which benefits 26 community organizations, was established through the Manatee Community Foundation and distributed in partnership with the SCF Foundation to the SCF Dental Hygiene Program to provide students with an opportunity to gain practical experience and give back to the community.

Excited at the news of passing the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination on the first try, every SCF dental hygiene graduate for the past 16 years has reacted in the same way—with a winning smile. What’s more impressive is their heart to win smiles from underserved children, families and senior citizens they serve.
Students in SCF’s rigorous Dental Hygiene Program regularly provide low-cost services—including teeth cleaning, oral examinations, dental X-rays, fluoride and sealant—to patients at the SCF Dental Hygiene Clinic while working under the close supervision of licensed dentists and SCF dental hygiene faculty.

“SCF instructors are wonderful because they teach us in a positive environment. They don't just tell us information so that we can retain it. They ask questions and expect us to use our knowledge to provide hands-on care,” said SCF alumna Marlene Ramirez.

Thanks to Ruf’s generous gift, students and faculty members offered free services to 115 patients, which included families and their children on free or reduced lunch, pregnant women with Manasota SOLVE, Meals on Wheels Plus low-income seniors, and migrant farm workers and their families at Saturday clinics in Spring 2015.

SCF students also participated in educational programs in the community to provide free toothbrushes and service to children and their families. They also received scholarships and dental hygiene tools for clinical practice.

SCF alumna Karen Rodriguez, a native of Honduras who often served as an interpreter for migrant families, was overwhelmed by the appreciation patients showed to her and her fellow students for their work in the community.

“It makes you feel like you aren't just cleaning teeth. You are doing more than that. You are giving them health and self-esteem. It's amazing how you can make that impact on someone's life,” she said.

Karen Rodriguez, Hannah Abalos and Brenda Salmeron won first place for their presentation, “Connect the Dots,” about the dangers of oral piercings on oral and systemic health, at the Florida Dental Hygiene Symposium in Orlando.

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Karen Rodriguez

History of the SCF Dental Hygiene Program

Developed in response to the needs of the local dental community, SCF’s Dental Hygiene Program began in 1999 when local dentists, Drs. Lindsey Eastman and George Burgess, approached Dr. Sarah H. Pappas, then president of Manatee Community College, with a vision to start a program to train dental hygienists. Backed with a strong showing of community support, Pappas received approval for the program and secured state funding to build the Dental Hygiene Clinic, which houses state-of-the-art equipment purchased by SCF Foundation benefactors.

Founding faculty members—retired Program Director Anita Weaver and Pam Kennard, an instructor who also later served as the Program Director—seized the vision to prepare future dental hygienists with practical experience in a clinical setting and outreach to the community through educational programs developed based on the needs of specific demographics.

SCF’s Dental Hygiene Program has a strong reputation for academic excellence. Graduates have continued the tradition of SCF’s 100% pass rate on the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination since the program began 16 years ago.
Whether their diplomas bear the name of State College of Florida, Manatee Community College or Manatee Junior College, alumni of the region’s oldest and largest public college share the life-changing experience of interacting with caring, knowledgeable professors who taught them valuable life lessons and guided them in choosing a career path.

Forever grateful for the foundation they received at MJC, MCC and SCF, alumni and students have invested their time and resources in giving back to the college and the community. In the coming pages, they’ll tell inspiring stories of how their early college years have shaped their lives and inspired them to pay it forward.

Attending MCC gave John LaCivita, a successful philanthropic businessman, an opportunity to experiment with his education at a low cost. He discovered that he wanted to follow in the general contractor footsteps of his father and grandfather, after all.

Lisa Bristow, a principal at a local accounting firm, had always dreamed of living in a big city, but she discovered she’s right where she wants to be—in her hometown of Bradenton, where she serves as treasurer of the SCF Foundation Board of Directors.

Marianne Barnebey, a past Bradenton City Councilwoman, was a first-generation college graduate of MJC, where she got her first opportunity to participate in female athletics as a cheerleader and achieve her goal of a college education.

Chris Romine pursued his dream of becoming a banker at MJC and was encouraged by professors to pursue his passion for music. More than 30 years later, he contributes to Florida’s Cultural Coast as a pianist in community concerts.

Years later, SCF’s Music Program continues to enrich the lives of students and graduates, including SCF Foundation scholarship recipients Liston Gregory III, Chris Leiper, Jade Turner and Katelyn Priest, who aspire to teach music and perform.

Recent graduates Ashley Eickelmann and Matthew Ruch, who also received scholarships, have seized every opportunity to make a difference in others’ lives through service on campus and in the community. Christopher Stough started a scholarship fund for his fellow student-veterans that drew overwhelming support from the community, and Tim Hyden, a training and safety officer for a local fire district, gave a portion of his own award money to make higher education accessible to the next generation of public safety personnel.

SCF alumnus Brian Newberry, who a served as a student manager for the basketball team and later returned to SCF and became the Athletic Equipment Clerk, was inducted posthumously into the 2015 Hall of Fame Class with former basketball player Stanley Cromartie and former baseball players David Howard and Robin Jennings.
SCF Athletics Celebrates Alumni

SCF’s rich athletic tradition is made up of many statistics, including number of wins, conference championships, and national appearances. Most importantly, though, the tradition is made up of people. Each year, the SCF Athletics Program celebrates these people by adding honorees to the SCF Athletics Hall of Fame. Again this year, the inductees represent students who found at SCF the support and quality instruction to excel.

Nominated posthumously, Brian Newberry’s long relationship with MCC/SCF Athletics began as the Riverview High School graduate approached Hall of Fame Coach Harry Kinnan to help the basketball team. As an SCF student with a passion for athletics, he served as the team’s student manager. After earning a bachelor’s degree from the University of South Florida, Newberry worked for professional baseball organizations before returning to SCF as the Athletic Equipment Clerk. He helped establish sports information and statistical data for the Athletic Department and facilitated communications with the media and community. He was the recipient of the GEM award, provided to Student Services employees who demonstrate professional perseverance and provide excellent customer service.

Rosem Carnie

Robin Jennings contributed to the baseball team’s history of success under Hall of Fame Coach Tim Hill. He helped win a Suncoast Conference Championship and FCSAA State Championship and played in the 1991 JUCO World Series. Jennings led the World Series in five of six offense categories and was named to the all-tournament team. He was drafted by the Chicago Cubs and reached the major leagues with the Cubs, Cincinnati Reds, Colorado Rockies and Oakland Athletics. Jennings retired after 13 years of professional baseball and has continued to support SCF athletics as he has transitioned to a business owner and entrepreneur. Upon Coach Hill’s retirement, Jennings and his company sponsored the alumni gift that was presented to Coach Hill at the alumni game.

Stanley Cromartie played basketball for the College from 1982 to 1984. In his freshman year, the point guard averaged 12 points and four assists while helping the Lancers post a school record for the most wins in a single season. In his second year, Cromartie averaged 17 points and four assists per game. He was named to the Suncoast All-Conference team in 1984. Cromartie earned a scholarship to play basketball at Webber International University. He then served as the Assistant Coach at Bethune-Cookman University and Head Coach at Valencia College and Seminole State College. Cromartie is Assistant Athletic Director at Edward Waters College, where he was previously Head Basketball Coach. For the past 21 years, Cromartie has hosted an annual basketball camp, free of charge, for Manatee County’s youth. Cromartie’s foundation, DRC Foundation, made a $1,000 contribution to the SCF Athletics Department during the Hall of Fame celebrations.

David Howard played middle infield and helped the Lancers to a state runner-up position in 1986. In 1987, Howard was drafted by the Kansas City Royals, made his major league debut in 1991, and played professional baseball until 1999. He also played for the St. Louis Cardinals during his major league career. While mainly serving as a middle infielder, Howard played every position (except catcher) while in the major leagues. He posted an impressive career .978 fielding percentage. He remains part of baseball as the minor league field coordinator for the Boston Red Sox.

Robin Jennings (left) with Stanley Cromartie, Carolyn Newberry (Brian Newberry’s mother) and David Howard at the SCF Athletics Hall of Fame dinner.
JOHN LaCIVITA

Dead set against following in the general contractor footsteps of his father and grandfather, John LaCivita set out to forge his own path at Manatee Community College (MCC), where he realized contracting was what he really wanted to do.

A successful alumnus who has invested in his community through philanthropy, LaCivita, a Sarasota native, is Vice President and Partner at Willis A. Smith Construction Inc., an award-winning, Sarasota-based construction management firm, which provides a scholarship through the SCF Foundation to encourage students in Manatee and Sarasota counties to seek a college education and pursue a career in the building construction industry.

LaCivita’s intense pursuit of finding a career direction in his early years was not overshadowed by his love for fun and adventure as a student at MCC.

“I really did have a great college life with my friends. We’d start out the day at the gym, go to class and get out as early as possible so we could go to parties on the beach and water ski with the Sarasota Ski-A-Rees. We’d get around to studying once in a while,” LaCivita said.

“I’m a true believer that MCC helped me get where I am today by allowing me to experiment with my education at a lesser cost and grow up a little before I went off to a university,” he said. “I tried accounting, but I hated it. I took law, but I argued with my professors because I didn’t agree with it.”

Taking a physics class with Professor Don Ziebell changed everything for LaCivita.

“He was the strongest professor that I’d ever met. He was quirky, wore a bow tie and had the worst dry sense of humor, but he really impressed me. As I continued through physics, calculus and statistics, I realized my mathematical aspiration, which led me back to contracting and construction,” LaCivita said.

His wife, Fran, also graduated from MCC with a nursing degree. She and many of her friends juggled taking college courses with working full-time jobs, so there wasn’t much free time.
“Back then, we came to MCC with a distinct purpose—to get our education. We were lucky because we were able to discover our passion at a young age, set goals and pursue them,” she said.

While at MCC, Fran and John were in the same circle of friends, but their paths didn’t cross until years later.

They spent a decade after college graduation building their careers. Fran was a registered nurse by age 19, and she became the youngest charge nurse at Sarasota Memorial Hospital. Eager to move to Gainesville, John skipped his graduation ceremony to head to the University of Florida to earn his building construction degree and later his general contractor’s license. They finally met in her parents’ backyard when they were set up.

As a married couple for the past 16 years, they’ve shared success and heartaches in life and in business, but through it all, they’ve grown together and discovered what truly matters.

John and Fran learned early on that success demands taking risks. One Christmas, they had only $4 to their name, and John made a tough decision to either leave his job to start his own construction company or request a partnership in the company where he was already employed. Taking that risk paid off. He now has enjoyed nearly 20 years of success as a Partner at Willis A. Smith Construction Inc.

Sharing the story years later during his keynote address to graduates at SCF’s Winter 2014 commencement brought a flood of emotions for John. And for someone who also hated speech in college, John gave an engaging, heartfelt charge to graduates to also take risks, whether they were continuing their education or directly entering the workforce.

“You’ve got to be a risk taker if you want to continue to grow. There are followers and leaders in life, but if you want to be a leader, you have to take risks or you will never, ever excel,” John said. “Once your risk taking leads to success, don’t forget the community that you came from or live in. It’s important to give back to that community through volunteerism.”

Fran and John, who are both cancer survivors, have led by example. Fran sits on committees for Samaritan Counseling Services of the Gulf Coast and The Make a Wish Foundation, and John serves on several organization boards and has received many awards for his service to the community.

“Having had cancer has given us a new outlook on life. We don’t get too wrapped up in things, we take things a little more lightly and we focus on what’s important—our family and giving back to the community,” John said.

“I’m a true believer that MCC helped me get where I am today by allowing me to experiment with my education at a lesser cost and grow up a little before I went off to a university.”
Lisa Bristow had always dreamed of living in a big city, but today, she couldn’t be happier working as a principal at CS&L CPAs, a certified public accounting firm, located right in the heart of downtown Bradenton, the city where she was raised. From her office overlooking the Manatee River, she is often reminded of the opportunities Bradenton has to offer and the path that led her home.

“Years ago, when I was growing up in Bradenton, it was a small, sleepy town. I greatly enjoyed my childhood here, but I had always planned on going away to college and living in a big, exciting city. At that time, I had no intention of building my career in Bradenton,” Bristow said. However, Bristow’s intended path took an unexpected turn.

After graduating from Manatee High School in 1977, her dream of adventure was postponed for only one reason—her love for softball. She deferred her plans to attend the University of Florida to instead accept a scholarship to play softball for the Manatee Junior College (MJC) Lancers.

Bristow, who had played in softball leagues throughout her childhood, was excited to continue competing in her favorite sport at a time when women’s college athletic opportunities were quickly growing. Fast-pitch softball was on the rise, and MJC built a new field on the Bradenton campus in her second year.

“Back then, it was still only a basic clay field. We didn’t even have a fence. If you hit the ball over the other team members’ heads, it was considered a home run because it rolled forever,” she said.

Bristow considers her early college years at MJC to be some of the best times of her life. “My time at MJC was so valuable as a new college student. In high school, everything came really easy to me, and my years spent at MJC proved to be a great stepping stone. I learned how to effectively study and prepare for my classes. I realized I could no longer just slide by,” Bristow said.
At MJC, she had planned to major in physical therapy. She took chemistry classes and labs, but she realized that she simply didn’t enjoy it. She later discovered that accounting came naturally to her when she took a class with Professor Smithers.

“It completely changed my life. He was a comedian, but he got the point across, and he gave me a solid background for my accounting degree,” Bristow said.

After graduating from MJC in 1979, Bristow earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting from the University of Florida. She immediately applied for jobs in Atlanta, Tampa and Fort Lauderdale—anywhere, but Bradenton—but a family friend talked her into dropping off her résumé and going for an interview at CS&L CPAs.

“It was my first real job, and it worked out really well for me. I’ve been there 32 years now,” Bristow said. “Even though I thought I had always wanted the excitement of a big city, when it comes down to it, what I truly wanted was for my kids to experience the same childhood I had. Bradenton is growing exponentially—it’s not that sleepy town anymore. Although it’s a different town today, it’s still a great place to live, and I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else,” she said.

“Much of my success can be attributed to the strong foundation I received at MJC, and it has always been important to me to give back in any way I can.”

Bristow’s experience at MJC fueled her passion for competition and developed her interest in accounting; two things that remain true today.

“I’ve always funneled my competitiveness into sports, and now that attitude goes into my work and career. I’ve always had a drive to succeed. Working in an accounting firm requires the same type of philosophy as being a player on a sports team. We work together because it takes the whole team to get the job done,” Bristow said.

Known as a team player in the community, Bristow shares her financial expertise through her service on several local nonprofit boards and as treasurer for the SCF Foundation Board of Directors.

“Much of my success can be attributed to the strong foundation I received at MJC, and it has always been important to me to give back in any way I can,” Bristow said.

Family: Husband, David, public information officer for the Manatee County Sheriff’s Office, and children, Courtney and Cara.
Education: Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Master of Accounting from the University of Florida.

Service to Community:
• Treasurer and Board Member, SCF Foundation Board of Directors
• Member, American Institute of CPAs and Florida Institute of CPAs
• Past Board Member and Financial Committee Member, United Way of Manatee County Foundation
• Past Board Member and Chair of Allocations, United Way of Manatee County
• Past President and Treasurer, Manatee County Gator Club
Bradenton native Marianne Barnebey comes from a lineage of strong women who firmly believed that education empowers women to achieve their dreams and make a difference in their communities.

After a lifetime of service to her community—including 14 years as an elected Bradenton City Councilwoman—Barnebey couldn’t agree more.

Thankful that she followed the advice of her mother and grandmother to enroll in Manatee Junior College (MJC) in 1975, Barnebey is even more grateful she received funding—including a Professional Association of the Girls Club of America scholarship, a Basic Educational Opportunity Grant, and $700 her uncle earned at his Palmetto worm farm—to pay for college.

“Had I not come to MJC, I probably wouldn’t have graduated from college. I got a very good education for not a lot of money. Going to college opened a whole new life for me,” Barnebey said.

MJC was a place of many firsts for Barnebey. Two life-changing experiences stand out: her first chance to join an athletic team, the MJC cheerleading squad, and her grandmother’s pride when she became the first person in her family to graduate from college.

MJC Cheerleading

Back then, MJC Basketball Coach Pat Healy encouraged enthusiasm for athletic events by having his basketball players wear their uniforms to remind students about game day and using money from his budget to purchase uniforms for the cheerleading squad.

“MJC gave me opportunities I never had. I attended Manatee High School before the days of Title IX, so there weren’t any women’s athletic teams to join. I loved cheerleading for its athleticism and the college life atmosphere it created,” Barnebey said.

“I had friends who went to large universities right out of high school. When they told me that they were in classrooms taught by graduate assistants, I couldn't help but believe that I had gotten a better education because I attended small classes taught by an MJC professor.”
Barnebey especially appreciates the College’s longstanding reputation in the community for offering quality academic programs taught by qualified, caring professors.

“I had friends who went to large universities right out of high school. When they told me that they were in classrooms taught by graduate assistants, I couldn't help but believe that I had gotten a better education because I attended small classes taught by an MJC professor,” she said.

A Grandmother’s Pride
When she graduated from MJC in 1977, Barnebey was her grandmother’s first grandchild to earn a college degree. Her grandmother, a self-taught bookkeeper who raised three girls during the Great Depression, experienced first-hand the disadvantage of earning lower wages than men and lacking the education to bridge the gap.

“To her, education was the fastest way for a woman to take care of herself and her family with a certain degree of parity,” she said.

Throughout her life, Barnebey has lived out her grandmother’s call for the advancement of women in the workforce.

Early in her career during the 1980s, Barnebey inspired young women at Girls Club of Sarasota and local Girl Scout councils to pursue their dreams and earn their college degree.

Years later, when she was the only woman on the Bradenton City Council, Barnebey, at her grandmother’s insistence, made it a point to go by the title, Councilwoman.

Service to Community:
• Bradenton City Councilwoman, 1998-2012
• Chair, Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2011
• Chair, Manatee County Library Board of Trustees, 2002-2014
• Founder and coordinator, Winter Wonderland, 1997-2013
• The Service Club of Manatee County, 2013-present
• Founding member and soloist, Faith United Methodist Church
• Vice President, ArtCenter Manatee

Family: Husband, Mark, an attorney at Blalock Walters, P.A., and children, Matthew, Christopher and Emily.

Education: Associate in Arts from MJC and Bachelor of Arts in Voluntary Agency Administration from High Point College in North Carolina.
As Senior Vice President and Managing Director at Northern Trust Bank in Manatee County, Chris Romine brings valuable financial expertise to the community, but his passion for music inspires him to contribute to Florida’s Cultural Coast in an unexpected, yet meaningful way—on stage at the piano performing in community recitals with young musicians.

Romine’s avocation of music and his leadership at Northern Trust Bank is a reflection of his liberal arts education from professors at Manatee Junior College who fueled his passion for music and taught him valuable life lessons that have shaped who he is today.

“I never had to leave Bradenton to rise to the rank of a senior vice president at a Fortune 400 company, one of the biggest, most well-respected financial companies in the world, Northern Trust Bank. To me, that is nothing less than astonishing, and I couldn’t have done it without what I learned from the professors at Manatee Junior College,” Romine said.

Encouraged by a family friend to consider a career in banking, Romine was still unsure of what he wanted to do when he came to MJC in 1980 as a young graduate of Manatee High School. For many of his fellow graduates, MJC was considered “an extension of high school” so they went directly to a university. But for Romine, who realized he wasn’t ready to immediately attend college away from home, MJC was an opportunity for growth and discovery.

“In my two years at MJC, I matured through close interaction with my professors who taught me intangible life lessons that I never would have learned at a large university... I’ve used them in life and in business. I’m a better person for it.”

Romine’s experience at MJC has inspired him to spend his life paying it forward by influencing others around him through strong leadership at Northern Trust Bank and enriching others’ lives through music.
Leadership at Northern Trust Bank

Grateful for his MJC calculus and economics professors, who instilled values of personal accountability and work ethic that have contributed to his success in the corporate world, Romine is especially appreciative of Philosophy Professor Dr. Herb Frith, who challenged him to practice humility and inclusiveness, which he believes are critical to his effectiveness as a leader.

“The greatest lesson that I learned was that my view isn’t always the reality of the situation. As a leader and final decision maker, I believe it’s important to intently listen to others to understand their point of view,” he said.

What Romine enjoys most about his leadership role at Northern Trust Bank is mentoring and developing team members by teaching them the importance of integrity and effectively dealing with people in confrontational situations so that they, too, can achieve success.

“I emphasize emotional intelligence because I firmly believe that 95 percent of a person’s success in life and in a corporation is their ability to work with others. Unfortunately, so many people think you have to have the highest IQ or come from the best college. All those things are great, but you won’t be successful if you can’t work with people and inspire them,” Romine said. “To use a financial analogy, you want to have more assets than liabilities with people. Not everyone is going to like you or agree with you, but they can respect you.”

Expression through Music

Music is a means of expression for Romine, who discovered his ability to play the piano after a devastating breakup at age 16. Forlorn at the loss of his high school sweetheart, Romine took a seat at his family’s baby grand piano, taught himself how to read music and played his first song, “Yesterday,” by the Beatles.

“It was like a silver lining on what seemed like a dark cloud, but amazingly, that’s what motivated me to learn how to play the piano. Later, my motivation changed because, of course, that scenario was long gone,” Romine said.

Romine’s desire to improve his piano skills was reawakened by Sandra Lawler, head of the MJC Music Department, who recognized his talent and encouraged him to take lessons and music theory courses. There, he and his fellow student musicians from all walks of life, including a guitarist who was a former commercial airline pilot, a drummer and a bass guitarist, formed a band and performed around town.

Not long after graduating from MJC, Romine took private lessons with Professor Dr. Charles Turon, who has taught generations of SCF students.

“Chris stood out in my mind because he was dedicated to music and determined to do whatever it took to fulfill his dream. I saw that when I was his teacher, and it has been confirmed many years later,” Turon said.

Gratified that Romine has continued to pursue his passion for music and regularly give back by performing in the community, Turon considers it a privilege to help his students enrich lives through music no matter their stage of life.
These State College of Florida music students are every teacher’s dream—they’re talented, respectful and deserving of awards and scholarships they’ve received through the SCF Foundation and the SCF Music Program. Here they tell their stories:

Liston Gregory III is a talented jazz pianist who has performed all over the world with his church group, HLP and the Love Campaign. His passion for music led him to SCF, where he discovered professors and students in his own hometown who have challenged him to become the musician he is today.

**Awards and Scholarships:** SCF Jazz Ensemble Scholarship and Keyboard Scholarship; Koenig Scholarship Fund at the SCF Foundation; Outstanding Freshman Music Student Award.

**Called out in Church:** At age 12, I wasn't interested in music until my pastor called me on stage during church and asked me to play the organ for the first time. I was with my friends and not really listening to the service so I thought I was in trouble. He left me on stage to play for an hour. It was so natural to me that I knew I was meant to be a musician.

**Experience at SCF:** SCF Music Instructor Joyce Valentine took me under her wing. I played by ear the first six years of my piano career with no formal training, so I was able to relate to music even more after taking music theory lessons and performance labs. When I take the stage, people can tell that I have a connection with my music.

What’s Next? After I get my bachelor's degree in jazz studies at the University of North Florida, I want to earn a master’s degree and doctorate so I can teach at a university. SCF has made a huge difference in my music career in the short amount of time that I have been here, and I can't wait to see where it's going. I want to reach out to kids just like me who want to make music and understand it. I can't see myself doing anything else.

Trumpet player Chris Leiper performed Taps at the student-led SCF 9/11 commemoration ceremonies and appeared at the SCF Foundation Scholarship Luncheon with Liston Gregory III and other SCF jazz musicians. Scholarships have made it possible for him to study under the talented SCF faculty musicians who have influenced him and encouraged him to pursue his dream of becoming a high school band teacher.

**Awards and Scholarships:** Music Ensemble Scholarship in SCF Jazz Ensemble and Combo, Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Band; Koenig Scholarship Fund at the SCF Foundation; Honorable Mention at the FCSAA Winter Music Symposium.
**Giving Back:** I taught students in Booker High School's marching band in the Fall 2014 season. I've found teaching to be more rewarding than just performing. I love to see kids succeed at something they weren't good at before.

**Experience at SCF:** The professors here are top-notch. I've studied with SCF Instructor Todd Craven, one of the best trumpet players in the area, and SCF Music Professor Dr. Charles Turon, who is one of the best teachers that I've ever had. I've performed for three years in Wind Ensemble and Orchestra under SCF Instrumental Studies Director Dr. Robyn Bell, who also is The Pops Orchestra conductor. I've learned so much about teaching and classroom management just by observing her.

You can come to SCF and be confident you're getting a premier music education—one of the best in the state. Sometimes, it's hard, especially in music, to go to the larger universities because you are overshadowed by more experienced students. At SCF, there's a lot more opportunity to perform, develop and even grow up. I'm far more prepared than I was three years ago to go to a university.

**What's Next?** I'm planning to get my Bachelor of Science in Music Education at the University of South Florida.

Vocalist and pianist Katelyn Priest performed with the Manatee Players and at Manatee School for the Arts before coming to SCF, where she has grown as a pianist, vocalist and actress. She played a lead role as Maria in “West Side Story” and appeared as Zaneeta in “The Music Man.”

**Awards and Scholarships:** Max Corzilius Music Scholarship Fund at the SCF Foundation; Koenig Scholarship Fund at the SCF Foundation; SCF Music Ensemble Scholarship; First place, Freshman Musical Theatre, Second place, Sophomore Musical Theatre, and Third place, Sophomore Classical Voice, at National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Tampa Bay Chapter Conference; selected for a vocal master class at FCSAA Music Winter Symposium; Most Outstanding Pianist, Manatee School for the Arts.

**First Music Experience:** I was about 3 or 5 when I first saw the musical “Cats” on PBS. My mom saw me dancing to every number in the show, so she recorded it for me. I have watched and danced to that tape so many times.

**From the Stage of “West Side Story”:** The experience of being a lead performer helped me become independent because I had an important part in driving the work ethic at rehearsals. I always had to be ready to open a song and be unafraid to mess up.

**Experience at SCF:** I was planning to be a piano accompanist, but when I came to SCF I started taking voice with SCF Vocal/Choral Studies and Music Program Director Melodie Dickerson. She helped me so much in such a short time that I feel very strong as a vocalist. I love the atmosphere at SCF because the professors are passionate about what they do. I never thought I would want to teach because I always wanted to perform, but I've come to appreciate the art of teaching.

It's a beautiful thing seeing a teacher become so excited when working with a student, and when the student achieves success.

**What's next?** What's great about being a music major is that you aren't stuck on one career path. When I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, my SCF Music Lecturer Rex Willis simply encouraged me to do what I love most. I want to be a vocal performance major at a university, participate in musical theatre productions, become an accompanist and conductor and teach. I'm hoping to have as many different experiences as possible to share with my students.

**Jade Turner** is a dynamic vocalist who was tapped at a young age to perform with the Performers Theatre Workshop at a cabaret club in New York City. SCF Foundation scholarships made it possible for Jade, who worked a full-time job and took 21 credits a semester, to return to SCF in her second year to star as Anita in “West Side Story.”

**Awards and Scholarships:** Max Corzilius Music Scholarship Fund at the SCF Foundation; Koenig Scholarship Fund at the SCF Foundation; SCF Music Theatre Scholarship; Second place, Freshman Musical Theatre, and First Place, Sophomore Musical Theatre, at the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Tampa Bay Chapter Conference; Second Place, Sophomore Musical Theatre, at the Southeastern Regional NATS Conference; Best Female Vocalist and Best Newcomer, Booker High School for the Performing Arts.

**First Music Experience:** My mom woke me up to Tina Turner's “Proud Mary” when I was a toddler. I'd stand in my crib and start bouncing with the biggest grin on my face.

**Dominick the Donkey:** I was in pre-Kindergarten and we sang our Christmas song, “Dominick the Donkey,” which I thought was hilarious because that was my brother's name. I called him donkey the whole Christmas Season. When I was in eighth grade, I went to an audition for “Rent,” and I belted out the song, "Out Tonight." Even though that song was extremely inappropriate for a 13-year-old, they looked past it and gave me the part.

**From the Stage of “West Side Story”:** When I was younger, I watched “West Side Story” with my mother, so playing the role of Anita was a real honor. Sometimes, I feel selfish when I'm on stage because I forget that the audience is there, and I get lost in the moment. I grow as a person and a musician when I am doing shows.

**Experience at SCF:** What's great about SCF is that I get individual attention. Rex Willis genuinely cares about us as students. It's more than just a job to him. Melodie Dickerson is one of the best vocal teachers I've ever had. She doesn't let you get away with anything, but she'll support you 110%. I've never had a teacher like her. She makes you feel fearless and confident. I didn't know there was another level I had to push for until I met her.

**What's Next?** I want to study musical theatre at the University of Tampa and eventually teach at a university.
When State College of Florida alumnus Matthew Ruch’s family suffered financial hardship during the Great Recession, he thought his dream of earning a college degree had slipped away.

Attending SCF as a dual-enrolled student and receiving the William G. and Marie Selby Foundation Scholarship through the SCF Foundation to continue his Associate in Arts degree made his dream a reality and opened his eyes to new possibilities for a future career in higher education.

“When growing up, there was never a question of whether I would go to college so it was a scary time in my life when I didn’t know how I could afford it. SCF was a convenient way to begin my higher education, but it became so much more—a community with unparalleled opportunities and a remarkable network of support,” Ruch said.

From the moment he stepped onto SCF Venice, Ruch was encouraged by Campus Executive Officer Darlene Wedler-Johnson to serve in leadership roles.

“I love SCF Venice because it’s a small campus where great relationships are built. Faculty, staff and even my fellow students have shown a genuine, vested interest in my success, and in turn, I have developed a deep commitment to the college,” Ruch said.

As President of the Alpha Mu Upsilon Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa—under Advisors Kristen Zaborski and Michael Rogers—he organized events, including an annual toy drive. He also juggled two part-time jobs as a student assistant in the SCF Library and as President of the SCF Venice Student Government Association (SGA), which he considers to be his proudest accomplishment at SCF.

Under the guidance of his friend and mentor, SGA Advisor Jeff Snyder, Ruch served more than 2,000 students as SGA President at SCF Venice, where he seized opportunities for personal, academic and professional growth, including raising more than $600 for All Faiths Food Bank.

“I have enjoyed the opportunity to give back by making a difference on campus as a student leader,” Ruch said. “I am grateful to the SCF Foundation for its financial support because there’s no other college where I would like to be.”

One of Ruch’s most rewarding memories is participating on SCF’s Model United Nations team under advisor Danny Fuerstman. Ruch was one of two SCF students to receive a perfect score on his position paper at the Southern Regional Model United Nations Conference.

He is known by his peers as an excellent communicator with strong diplomatic skills, which has contributed to his success at SCF.

“If you asked me to pick a student from my time at the college to be an ambassador to communicate what the college means and does, I would choose Matthew,” Fuerstman said.

Ruch’s experience at SCF has made such a lasting impression that he has dedicated his professional career to serving college students. He hopes to return to SCF after pursuing a bachelor’s degree in communications and later earning a Ph.D. in Education Leadership.
On her journey to become a pediatric nurse, State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota (SCF) Ashley Eickelmann has faced financial struggles, but the generosity of the SCF Foundation benefactors has strengthened her resolve to achieve her dreams.

Dedicated to preparing for her nursing career, Eickelmann proudly maintained a 4.0 grade-point average while juggling part-time jobs at Kiddie Academy in Lakewood Ranch and Whitfield Exchange and working as a babysitter. Eickelmann is one of many deserving SCF “gap students” who earns too much money to qualify for financial aid but not enough to cover the cost of tuition and books.

For her stellar academic performance and hard work, she received the Keith E. Tucker Scholarship at the SCF Foundation. She was honored to serve as the Mistress of Ceremonies at the SCF Foundation’s 14th Annual Scholarship Luncheon to thank benefactors for their support of SCF students.

“It was such a great experience to personally thank so many people who have influenced my life and the lives of others through their generosity,” Eickelmann said.

Eickelmann, who is extremely thankful for the scholarships she has received, understands the importance of investing in the community through service even when money is scarce.

While her parents have been unable to pay for her education after experiencing hardship during the economic downturn, Eickelmann has continued to follow her passion for helping care for children. Inspired by her mother, who is a language arts teacher at Braden River Middle School, she first considered becoming an elementary school teacher. She volunteered at her church and local elementary schools and earned her Child Development Associate credential as a student at Lakewood Ranch High School.

When she came to SCF, she discovered that she enjoyed biology and decided to pursue a career in pediatric nursing. She has seized every opportunity to make a difference in others’ lives and has begun paying it forward by serving as a volunteer at Manatee Memorial Hospital’s pediatric, labor and delivery, and neonatal intensive-care units.

Eickelmann earned an Associate in Arts degree in Spring 2015 and plans to continue at SCF in the Associate in Science in Nursing Program.

“Paying it Forward

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SCF is one of 25 colleges and universities nationwide to participate in Yale University's Small World Initiative, which engages students in a real-world research project by searching for and identifying antibiotic-producing bacteria in soil and other environments. SCF microbiology students, led by Natural Sciences Instructor Dr. Eric Warrick, participated in authentic scientific research that addresses one of the most serious modern health threats: antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

SCF was named a Military Friendly School for the fifth year. SCF is recognized among the top 20% of all colleges, universities and trade schools nationwide for exhibiting leading practices in the recruitment and retention of students with military experience and ensuring the success of military service members, veterans and spouses as college students.

SCF received the American Heart Association Worksite Innovation Award, recognizing the College’s employee wellness program. SCF President Dr. Carol Probstfeld was a keynote speaker at the American Heart Association’s Heart Walk Executive Breakfast.

SCF is a charter member of the Manufacturing Institute’s "M-list," which recognizes schools for excellence in manufacturing education. The Manufacturing Institute is an organization dedicated to improving and expanding manufacturing nationally. SCF was 1 of 11 Florida College System institutions to be selected, helping Florida lead the nation with the most schools on the list.

SCF won first place in the School–College category in the Best of Venice program sponsored by the Venice Gondolier. SCF students and staff attended the awards ceremony to receive the plaque honoring the College.

All SCF health programs, including Dental Hygiene, Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapist Assistant and Radiography, are nationally accredited and tout a 100% pass rate on national exams. SCF is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Whitney Carney, Regional Director for the American Heart Association, SCF President Dr. Carol Probstfeld and Employee Wellness Coordinator Kristi Bracewell.

Catherine Pope was the Spring 2015 recipient of the Pat Kuebler Memorial Scholarship Award at the SCF Foundation at a pinning ceremony honoring graduates. Eighty-one nursing students earned A.S. in Nursing degrees in Spring 2015.
SCF Library Director Tracy Elliott was invited to present the findings of her dissertation, “The Relationship Between Leadership and Organizational Learning in Academic Libraries,” as part of the Library Leadership & Management Association program at the American Library Association Annual Conference. Her study examined the influence of leadership styles such as transformational, transactional and passive-avoidant on the organizational learning capacity of libraries in colleges and universities. She earned her Ph.D. in Leadership and Education with an emphasis in higher education administration.

SCF President Dr. Carol Probstfeld with Spring 2015 Outstanding Graduate Award recipients (left to right) Leon Hostetler and Carol Rauen and finalists Angel Kelly, Andres Gomez Aunca, Nelly Wilson, Megan Orlando, Matthew Ruch and Andrea Huertas-Meza.

SCF Venice Campus Executive Officer Darlene Wedler-Johnson received Phi Theta Kappa’s prestigious Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction. She was recognized at the 2015 All-Florida Academic Team Awards Ceremony and at PTK’s 97th Annual Convention in Spring 2015.

SCF Venice Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) Advisor Dr. Louis Okonkwo (center) recognized PBL officers at Honors Convocation, including Secretary Nicky Jones, President Naomi Stiwich, Parliamentarian Ethel “Mickie” Abel and Reporter Alexis Jenkins.

SCF students qualified to compete in the 2015 Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda (FBLA-PBL) National Leadership Conference after excelling at the State Conference. Anne Miller won First Place in Business Presentation and Retail Management, and Naomi Stiwich won Second Place in Impromptu Speaking. “Mickie” Abel was inducted into the FBLA-PBL Who’s Who in Florida PBL and won the Rob Kelleher Memorial Award.

SCF Collegiate School students were honored at the 2015 Commencement Ceremony. Nelly Wilson, Outstanding Graduate Award; Carlyle Styer, Graduate Appreciation Award; John Vigil, Graduate Achievement Award; with Kelly Monod, SCF Collegiate School Head of School.

The 2015 graduating class completed more than 9,000 community service hours and won more than $1.2 million in college scholarships.

SCF Collegiate students Felicia May won First Place in the Senior Historical Papers and Kaitlin Folsom won Second Place in the Senior Individual Performance at the Florida History Fair in Tallahassee and were invited to compete in the National History Day contest at the University of Maryland, College Park.
SCF alumnus Tim Hyden’s unwavering confidence in State College of Florida to empower future generations of public safety personnel compelled him to make a lasting contribution through a new SCF Foundation scholarship named in honor of his late professor, Fire Chief Mark Souders.

Hyden, an East Manatee Fire Rescue District Training and Safety Officer who earned a Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) in Public Safety Administration degree from SCF, announced the new Fire Chief Mark Souders Memorial Scholarship moments after accepting the Outstanding Baccalaureate Graduate Award at the Spring 2014 Commencement.

Hyden made the first donation of $2,000, including $1,500 from his Outstanding Graduate Award winnings, to start the scholarship, which benefits students in SCF’s B.A.S. in Public Safety Administration degree program.

Tim Hyden and President Dr. Carol Probstfeld with his Outstanding Baccalaureate Graduate Award at the May 2014 Commencement.

Tim Hyden with SCF Foundation Director Cassandra Holmes.
I was fortunate to be able to afford my college education and wanted to give back by helping provide scholarships for students with financial need. What a great way to honor Mark for his commitment to the fire service and SCF,” Hyden said.

A former City of Bradenton Fire Chief and President of the Florida Fire Chiefs’ Association, Souders served as SCF’s Fire Science Technology Program Director. He also played a vital role in developing SCF’s B.A.S. in Public Safety Administration and B.A.S. in Homeland Security degrees by accompanying SCF administrators to the State Board of Education meeting to emphasize the need for the programs in Manatee and Sarasota counties.

Inspired by Souders’ commitment to professionalism and higher education for fire service personnel, Hyden, a U.S. Air Force veteran and a Florida firefighter for 22 years, was challenged to expand his knowledge and enhance his work in fire service through higher education.

To give back to SCF, Hyden serves on advisory boards/steering committees for the B.A.S. in Public Safety Administration degree program. He also promotes the scholarship to future donors in the public safety community and assists in selecting scholarship recipients.

At the SCF Foundation Scholarship Luncheon, Hyden had the opportunity to meet the first recipient of the Fire Chief Mark Souders Memorial Scholarship, Aimee Fike, a single mother of three children who earned bachelor’s degrees in public safety administration and homeland security from SCF.

“Aimee really stood out as someone Mark would have selected. She has had challenges, but she has persevered. She’s a very capable individual who shows great promise and sets a strong example for others in the public safety profession,” Hyden said.

Fike has had more than 10 years of experience working for the federal government and plans to later return as an emergency manager. She is grateful to Hyden for the scholarship and his help in getting an internship at the Charlotte County Public Safety Office after she graduated in December 2014.

“Tim is the pinnacle of service. Not only does he serve the community as a fire training officer, but he is giving to other students through a scholarship named for someone else. To me, he sets a high standard,” Fike said.
SCHOLARSHIP PROFILE

CHRISTOPHER STOUGH

State College of Florida graduate Christopher Stough’s journey to fulfill his responsibility as a single father and make good on a promise to his mother to earn a college degree led him to discover a new hope for his future and an unexpected opportunity to make a difference in the lives of his fellow veterans.

Grateful to attend SCF—a nationally recognized Military Friendly School for its success in providing resources and support to veterans transitioning to civilian life—Stough, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, has gained strength in camaraderie with other student-veterans and led the charge to help others achieve their dream of a college education.

In his service as President of the SCF Venice Student Veterans Club, Stough, a Spring 2015 graduate, identified the need to ease student-veterans’ financial burden with an endowed scholarship established through the SCF Foundation.

His vision became a reality when the community responded with overwhelming support.
On Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2014—less than a year after the scholarship was created—the SCF Veterans Scholarship Fund became fully endowed at $25,000 thanks to the generosity of the Sarasota and Venice Kiwanis Clubs, which hosted Veterans Day breakfast events to bolster the fund.

“When we heard about the SCF Foundation’s goal of filling the gap in student-veterans’ needs through a scholarship fund, it was a natural fit because we’ve always had a heart for veterans, and we thank them for their service to our country,” said John Moore, President of the Kiwanis Club of Sarasota.

Combined with American Legion NO-VEL Post 159’s first significant gift of $4,000, the Military Officers Association of Sarasota’s gift of $1,000, other individual donations and matching funds of $25,000 from the SCF Foundation, the SCF Veterans Scholarship Fund has now reached $44,000. There are $3,000 in matching funds still available.

“I am amazed at the astounding community support for SCF student-veterans. This scholarship will enhance SCF’s already amazing Veterans Program and boost veterans’ educational opportunities,” Stough said.

Stough, who graduated with his Bachelor of Applied Science in Homeland Security in May, is humbled to have played a significant role in helping future generations of SCF student-veterans, but he credits SCF for fostering an environment that encourages student-led initiatives.

The Veterans Program began when SCF administrators and staff answered students’ unified call for services to meet the unique needs of nearly 400 veterans from all branches of the military who attend SCF. Veterans Centers in Bradenton and Venice now serve as a hub for students in veterans clubs to plan community service projects, complete coursework in the computer lab, and receive assistance with accessing VA educational benefits and selecting courses from experienced veterans benefits advisors.

SCF alumnus Bill Graydon knows first-hand the challenges veterans face when they transition from military to civilian life, compelling him to start the SCF Venice Veterans Club as a student in 2010. His own transformative experience of coming to SCF in his late 30s after an eight-year military career fueled his desire to return to SCF as a mentor and Veterans Benefits Advisor to students, particularly combat veterans.

“I’m in awe of combat veterans who I work with every day because they have given the prime career-building years of their lives in service to their country. Without a college degree, they are struggling to make it financially. They deserve our support,” Graydon said.

Graydon, who has worked alongside Stough and the SCF Foundation to set up a Veterans Emergency Fund for students while they wait to receive their VA benefits, is pleased that student-veterans have taken ownership of helping other veterans through the new scholarship.

“Chris has taken the SCF Veterans Program to a new level, and his leadership has made a lasting contribution to other veterans who come to SCF on a quest to make a new life for themselves,” Graydon said.

“I am amazed at the astounding community support for SCF student-veterans. This scholarship will enhance SCF’s already amazing Veterans Program and boost veterans’ educational opportunities.”

SCF student veterans celebrate their graduation at the Spring 2015 Commencement.
Avenues des Artistes, Evening Under the Stars, Scholarship Luncheon and more.
The SCF Foundation thanks the generous sponsors who made this past year’s events successful.

2014 Annual Scholarship Luncheon

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Save the Date
Sat., Feb. 20, 2016
Save the Date
Sat., April 9, 2016
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