

CRAVEN

COMMUNITY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Celebrating 60 years



1965 - 2025



ON THE COVER:

The College acquired a 1965 Ford Thunderbird to commemorate our 60th anniversary. It also serves as a unique instructional asset for teaching automotive students about pre-emissions-era systems repair and maintenance.

EDITOR

Craig Ramey

WRITERS

Holly Desrosier
Craig Ramey

DESIGNER

Holly Desrosier

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Holly Desrosier
Craig Ramey
Joseph Soscia

CONTRIBUTORS

Jennifer Baer
Christina Bowman-Murray
Fernanda Marinkovic
Amber Smith
Dr. Ray Staats
Charles Wethington

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

This year, we've been celebrating a momentous milestone in the life of Craven Community College—our 60th anniversary. Chartered on July 1, 1965 as the Craven Industrial Education Center, our College has grown from its early beginnings in downtown New Bern into a dynamic, multi-campus institution that serves more than 8,500 students each year. As we reflect on this milestone, our theme of “Deep Roots, Strong Futures” captures both our journey and our vision.

Our deep roots trace back to the early 1960s, when adult education courses were first taught in Craven County. From the first classes in blueprint reading and electronics to our early nursing students studying at St. Luke's Hospital, we possessed a clear commitment to accessible, workforce-driven education. Just three years after our official chartering by the North Carolina General Assembly, Craven County Technical Institute held its first Board of Trustees meeting on April 23, 1968—a date we now honor each year as Founders' Day. In 1971, we moved to our present-day main campus.

Over the past six decades, our College has grown in every way imaginable:

- From 88 students in 1968 to more than 8,500
- From a budget of \$339,000 to more than \$40 million
- From just six staff and 57 faculty to more than 500 dedicated professionals

We've expanded our footprint across Craven County, growing from a single main campus in New Bern to add the Havelock-Cherry Point campus, the Volt Center in downtown New Bern, and soon the Public Safety Training Center at the Craven County Industrial Park. And with new programs launched this year in Surgical Technology, Electrical Engineering, Environmental Services, night/weekend Practical Nursing, and much more, our evolution continues to keep pace with the growing educational and workforce needs of our region.

The College's purpose-driven growth propels student success. This past May, we conducted our 58th annual commencement, proudly recognizing the accomplishments of the Class of 2025. Each graduate carries forward our legacy of transformation, whether they're directly entering or re-entering the workforce, transferring to a university, or building new skills as lifelong learners. Their futures are a direct reflection of the strong foundation laid down during their journey as Craven Community College students.

Throughout this special anniversary year, we've honored some of the many people who made this institution possible—from our founding president, Dr. Thurman Brock, to the educators, staff, and community partners who helped grow and shape our College across six decades. Our regional presence and success are owed to their shared vision, devotion, and energy.

Thank you for being part of Craven's journey. Whether you are an alumnus, a parent, a partner, or a friend, your support is the reason we continue to grow, innovate, and serve.

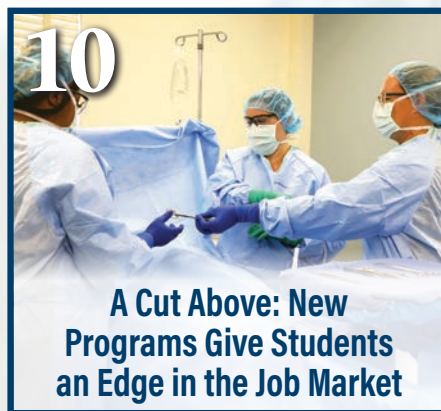
Deep Roots, Strong Futures. For our students. For our community. Here's to 60 years of positive impact—and to the many decades ahead.

DR. RAY STAATS
PRESIDENT



IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 NEWS BRIEFS
- 8 CONSTRUCTION UPDATES
- 10 A CUT ABOVE: NEW PROGRAMS GIVE STUDENTS AN EDGE IN THE JOB MARKET
- 14 FIELD OF FLAGS
- 17 COMMUNITY FABRIC AWARDS
- 18 DEEP ROOTS, STRONG FUTURES: CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
- 22 PANTHER PRAISE
- 24 STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE
- 27 EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE
- 28 FOUNDATION SUPPORT
- 30 DONOR APPRECIATION
- 34 STUDENT SPOTLIGHT
- 38 CAMPUS & COMMUNITY



NC Secretary of State Boosts Rural Economy at Volt Center Roundtable

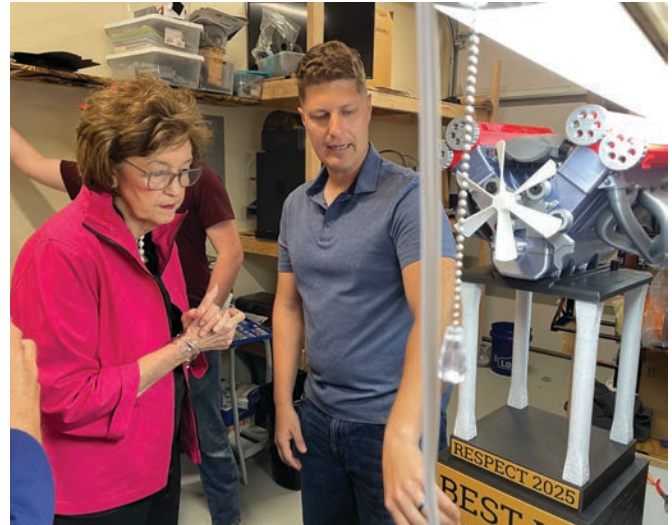
North Carolina Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall recently visited Craven Community College's Volt Center campus in May, hosting an economic roundtable as part of the state's Rural Resources for Innovators, Start-ups, and Entrepreneurs (RISE) NC initiative.

Secretary Marshall was joined by small business owners, economic developers, small business advocates, and area leaders. She provided attendees with various resources designed to assist businesses. The roundtable served as a platform to discuss the Rural RISE NC initiative, review data on new businesses, and analyze recent surveys of new business creators.

During the session, business owners candidly shared their challenges, particularly in areas such as staffing, social media presence, and navigating insurance reimbursements. Following the roundtable, Secretary Marshall extended her visit to local businesses and entrepreneurs in the New Bern area.

The Rural RISE NC initiative, spearheaded by the Secretary of State's office, aims to bolster rural economies by connecting business owners with crucial resources including mentors, business counselors, and

funding sources, many of which are offered at no cost. The initiative is designed to support both budding entrepreneurs embarking on new ventures and established businesses seeking avenues for growth.



Craven CC hosted NC Secretary of State Elaine Marshall at the Volt Center on May 2. Her visit was part of the Rural RISE NC initiative.

Craven CC Adopts Mayland CC in Hurricane Helene Recovery Effort

In a display of system-wide solidarity, Craven CC launched a significant fundraising drive in October 2024 to support Mayland Community College's extensive recovery efforts after the devastating impact of Hurricane Helene. Mayland CC, located in the small mountain town of Spruce Pine, North Carolina, was completely devastated by the widespread flooding and wind damage.

Spruce Pine, with a population of just over 2,200 and approximately 50 miles from Asheville, was, like many other western NC mountain communities, ill-equipped to handle the scale of such destruction. Several of Mayland's faculty, staff, and students lost everything, and the campus remained closed for several months as the full extent of the damage was assessed. As a sister institution within the North Carolina Community College System, Craven CC effectively "adopted" Mayland in an effort to help them reopen their doors and support their community's recovery.

The Craven community responded generously. In Fall 2024, employees, students, and local community members collectively raised \$6,950 and donated 30 student laptops. Additionally, Coastal Carolina CC coordinated the delivery of 40 laptops to Craven's Foundation office, which were then transferred to Mayland CC. This past spring, Craven CC built on those efforts by contributing \$6,000 toward the

purchase of a tractor for the Mayland Earth to Sky Park, an essential facility for environmental education, sustainability, and community engagement operated by Mayland CC.

The Student Veterans of America Craven CC chapter also played a vital role in the relief effort. In October, they partnered with the Animal Hospital of New Bern, PLLC and Paws of War Eastern North Carolina to collect essential items for both animals and humans affected by the storm, further broadening the scope of the recovery assistance.



Executive Director of Institutional Advancement Charles Wethington (left) helps IT Technician Abigail Nehrenberg load 30 laptops to deliver to Mayland Community College.

Craven CC Ignites STEM Curiosity with Interactive Campus Events

Craven CC brought the world of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) to life with a series of interactive events across its New Bern, Havelock, and Volt Center campuses this April. Each free event offered engaging, hands-on learning experiences for all ages.

The week kicked off at the Volt Center's STEM Open House, where high school students and their families explored clean energy trades, HVAC, and electrical fields. Next, the New Bern campus hosted "Science: Everyday, Everywhere, Everyone" in conjunction with the NC Science Festival. This popular event engaged people of all ages with activities such as building solar critters, creating tiny terrariums,

conducting taste tests, fractal building, exploring "the microworld," and becoming a community scientist.

The STEM festivities concluded at the Havelock campus with "Engineering Your Future: NC State Engineering Info Night." High school and college students and their families discovered local engineering pathways, including Craven CC's associate in engineering program and the NC State Havelock Engineering Program. The session provided valuable insights into the engineering field, how it differs from other STEM disciplines, and the promising career opportunities in Eastern North Carolina. This event was also held in partnership with the NC Science Festival.



Community members of all ages enjoy hands-on science and engineering events across the College's three campuses.

New Technology Enhances Student Savings and Campus Safety

Craven CC recently rolled out a new era of student support, embracing technology to enhance both learning and safety. The College partnered with BibliU, a leading digital textbook provider, to offer students more accessible and affordable course materials. This initiative, which began during the spring semester, aims to significantly reduce textbook costs and simplify the learning experience.

As a result, digital textbook costs are now integrated into course fees and are eligible for financial aid for qualifying students. This shift to digital textbooks offers easier access to materials and significantly lowers student expenses by reducing the need for separate purchases.

In another technological advancement, Craven CC launched its new Craven Safe app in January, greatly enhancing campus safety. This official mobile app integrates directly with the College's security systems to provide students, faculty, and staff with peace of mind.

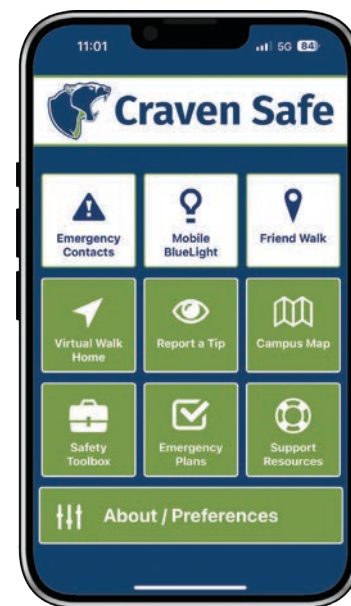
Craven Safe ensures faster alerts, delivering critical notifications to users' phones in seconds. It includes an emergency button for quickly calling for help and sharing locations with a single tap. Users can also report incidents directly to authorities, making it easy to report suspicious activity or emergencies.

For added security, the app features Friend Walk, allowing users to share real-time location with friends or campus security. Additionally, users have instant access to vital information like emergency plans, important contacts, and campus maps.

Download on the
App Store



GET IT ON
Google Play



Craven CC Unveils Interactive Congleton Sculpture Collection Walking Tour

The Craven CC Foundation launched an interactive walking tour of the Dr. James B. Congleton, III Sculpture Collection during a special event on April 27. Dr. Jim Congleton, esteemed art collector and Foundation Board member, generously donated the artwork to the College.

Dr. Congleton discussed his personal journey of amassing the diverse 28-piece outdoor sculpture collection and the thoughtful considerations behind his selections. Attendees heard his unique insights on the stories and significance behind each creation.

"For all of us who work and learn on the New Bern campus, we are very fortunate to view the collection on a daily basis," said Charles Wethington, Craven CC Executive Director of Institutional Advancement. "The collection adds to the fabric of our daily experiences as we walk around the campus."

The tour uses QR codes at each sculpture, allowing visitors to scan them with mobile devices to access detailed information about the artwork and artists. This new tour transforms the campus into an open-air gallery, inviting all to experience art, education, and nature. Visit the microsite at CravenCC.edu/CongletonCollection.



This bronze statue titled "Boy on Stilts" is one of 28 pieces in the College's Congleton Sculpture Collection.

Craven CC Establishes Alumni Association to Connect Graduates

Craven CC has officially started an Alumni Association, dedicated to building a strong network for its graduates. The association's core mission is to provide Craven alumni with valuable networking and career development opportunities, aiming to cultivate a stronger local community, enhance job prospects, and solidify a shared commitment to Craven County's future.

Membership is open to all Craven CC certificate, diploma, and degree holders, as well as Workforce Development students who have completed at least 96 hours of classes or earned a certification. For just \$10 annually, members receive benefits such as a discount card for local businesses, exclusive Craven merchandise, a quarterly e-newsletter, invitations to college events, and discounts on select Lifetime Learning Center events. Interested graduates can sign up online at CravenCC.edu/Alumni.

Case Study Examines Partnership Between Craven CC and CarolinaEast

EducationNC, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving education in North Carolina through news, research, and advocacy, recently published its second case study about the benefits of partnerships between community colleges and healthcare organizations. This study examines how the successful partnership between Craven CC and CarolinaEast Health System addresses healthcare workforce shortages through strategic initiatives such as grant-funded faculty positions, accelerated program development, and flexible course scheduling.

This strong partnership has resulted in many graduates of Craven's Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program being hired by CarolinaEast. The College now offers two annual application and enrollment periods for its ADN program to meet the increasing demand for nurses and provide more opportunities for students to enter the field.

Bidding a Fond Farewell to NC State Havelock Engineering Program Pioneer

After more than a decade of dedicated service, Dr. Bill Fortney, NC State Regional Director of Engineering and founder of the NC State Havelock Engineering Program, has officially retired.

When the Havelock campus launched its first engineering program in May 2012, it graduated just four students. The program has flourished under Fortney's leadership, with its most recent graduating class boasting 15 students.

In total, an impressive 109 students have now earned their bachelor's degrees through the program. His impact on the lives of dozens of students and on Craven's history is truly indelible, and his presence will be greatly missed.



Craven CC President Dr. Ray Staats (right) presents Dr. Bill Fortney with a plaque dedicating the NC State Havelock Engineering Lab in his honor. The partnership has produced 109 graduates since 2012.



Dr. Bill Fortney, center, celebrates his retirement with several members of his extended family.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Breaking Ground on the New Corporate Training Center

The New Bern campus footprint changed for the first time in 16 years with a groundbreaking ceremony held for the Corporate Training Center (CTC) on March 18. This new facility, which will be located between Kelso Hall and Bate Hall, is the first new construction on the main campus since Bate Hall and Bosch AMC were opened in 2009.

“Once completed, the Corporate Training Center will serve as a premier space for professional development training and collaboration,” said Dr. Ray Staats, Craven CC President. “We anticipate that the CTC will be a regional jewel supporting educational programs, community engagement, corporate training, and local economic development.”

The CTC will primarily be used for professional development to conduct trainings or host educational meetings and seminars. This one-story building will consist of a large meeting space and several office spaces. Its flexibility will allow for larger class sizes to meet or spread out if necessary.

Approval for this project was granted by the North Carolina State Construction Office on July 21, 2023. The College is working closely on this project with Waters Contracting Company and JKF Architecture to reach an anticipated completion date of February 2026.



These architectural renderings show the anticipated design and location of the new Corporate Training Center.



Craven CC hosts a groundbreaking for the Corporate Training Center on March 18. Pictured left to right are: Malcolm Waters, Waters Contracting Company President; Dr. Ray Staats, Craven CC President; Jeff Wood, Craven County Economic Development Director; Dr. Ervin Patrick, Craven CC Trustee Chair; John Farkas, JKF Architecture President; Jeffrey Odham, New Bern Mayor; and Denny Bucher, Craven County Board of Commissioners Chair.

Expansion at Volt Center Boosts Workforce and Entrepreneurship

The Volt Center hosted two ribbon-cutting ceremonies this year for programs that were made possible in part through grant funding provided by the Golden LEAF Foundation. The first ribbon cutting was on Jan. 30 for a new Heavy Equipment Operations building and the second was on Feb. 8 for the Small Business Center (SBC) Generator.

“We’re incredibly thankful to the Golden LEAF Foundation for their partnership and shared commitment to workforce development,” said Dr. Gery Boucher, Vice President for Development at Craven CC. “Collaborations like this are essential as we expand hands-on training programs that meet the needs of both our students and regional employers.”

The Heavy Equipment Operations program includes a state-of-the-art simulator lab, where each of the three personal stations replicates real-world conditions. Students master the operation of bulldozers, excavators, and backhoes. Before ever climbing into a cab, students build confidence and skill in a safe, virtual environment.

The program goes far beyond simulation: Students receive hands-on instruction in full-sized equipment, learn critical safety protocols, and explore career paths in construction and infrastructure. From equipment identification and

routine maintenance to precision earthmoving and final driving evaluations, the curriculum is built to mirror industry standards and prepare graduates for immediate entry into the workforce.

Meanwhile, just steps away in another corner of the Volt Center campus, the spirit of entrepreneurship is taking root. The newly launched SBC Generator is Craven CC’s small business incubator, designed to support early-stage ventures with both space and support. Housed in a freshly renovated commercial wing, the Generator includes four dedicated bays for startups to grow their operations. Approved participants can stay for up to two years, gaining access to mentorship, office equipment, educational workshops, and meeting space—all under one roof.

The Generator’s first entrepreneur, Gremlin 3D, moved into the space soon after the ribbon cutting. Gremlin 3D is a veteran-owned manufacturing company that specializes in high-precision 3D printing and rapid prototyping. Serving industries like aerospace, automotive, and healthcare, the company transforms complex digital designs into functional, real-world parts. The SBC is currently reviewing applications for entrepreneurs interested in the Generator’s remaining workspaces.

❖ In Memoriam: Building Dedications ❖

TAYLOR HALL

William “Bill” Wayne Taylor, a dedicated Craven CC Trustee since August 2014, passed away on July 15, 2024. Bill faithfully served the College, holding the position of Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees from 2016 to 2017, and then Chair from 2017 to 2019. The Volt Center trades building was dedicated in his honor as Taylor Hall on Dec. 10, 2024.



CHAUNCEY VERNON STEVENSON PRACTICE ROOM

Craven's music program thrived under the leadership of Chauncey Stevenson, who passed away on July 6, 2024 after serving 14 years as a faculty member and eventual coordinator of fine arts programs.



To honor his lasting influence on the program and its students, the Chauncey Vernon Stevenson Practice Room was dedicated on April 2, 2025.

Located in Orringer Hall, this rehearsal space is where many aspiring musicians learned new techniques, found their voices, and made lifelong connections under the tutelage of their beloved professor and friend.



The new Surgical Technology program, in partnership with CarolinaEast, teaches students essential operating room skills.

A CUT ABOVE

New Programs Give Students an Edge in the Job Market

In an ever-evolving economy, Craven Community College is at the forefront of preparing individuals for the jobs of tomorrow. Through innovative new training programs and strategic partnerships, the College is not only responding to the dynamic needs of local industries but also creating clear, accessible pathways to exciting new career opportunities for students across Eastern North Carolina.

NEW SURGICAL PROGRAM MEETS HEALTHCARE DEMAND

Craven CC has significantly advanced its healthcare education offerings with the launch of a new Surgical Technology program, developed in partnership with CarolinaEast Health System. This program, which began in August 2024, offers students a unique blend of classroom learning on campus and invaluable hands-on experience

directly within CarolinaEast's surgical suite, creating a direct pathway to a vital workforce for the hospital. The inaugural cohort of students graduated in April 2025.

Surgical technology presents an exciting and mobile career avenue for those passionate about healthcare, offering strong growth prospects within a collaborative environment. Surgical technologists typically work in hospital and outpatient surgical settings, where their crucial role involves ensuring all supplies and equipment are properly prepared for surgery. They also collaborate closely with surgeons in the operating room, providing instruments and assisting throughout procedures. They are responsible for continuously monitoring and maintaining the sterile field while anticipating the surgeon's needs, donning sterile attire, being on their feet for extended periods, and meticulously following aseptic techniques.



William Hale, Surgical Technology program coordinator, presents information on cervical vertebrae during a hands-on demonstration.

The College's partnership with CarolinaEast is a cornerstone of the program's success, enriching educational experiences while directly addressing the hospital's workforce needs.

"CarolinaEast Medical Center has graciously allowed us to use their surgical suite for all the lab work, which means we don't have to purchase equipment to have on campus," said Dr. Alec Newton, Craven CC Associate Vice President for Instruction. "CarolinaEast has definitely stepped up to support this program."

As CarolinaEast sees increased demand for surgical technologists, this program aims to bridge that gap with local talent. It consists of two courses and takes approximately eight months to complete. It introduces students to perioperative care, patient care concepts, and professional practice.

Students begin by studying essential topics such as medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, microbiology, equipment, pharmacology, anesthesia, environmental safety, and sterile technique. As the program progresses, students delve into specific surgical procedures and specialties, coinciding with clinical rotations where they will assist with 125 surgeries in the operating room at CarolinaEast Medical Center.

Upon completion, graduates receive a certificate and are eligible to take the Tech in Surgery-Certified examination by the National Center for Competency Testing, which enhances their career prospects nationally.

Growing Field of Surgical Technology

- 📈 Jobs projected to grow 5% through 2032
(Faster than average for all occupations)
- 💰 National median salary (May 2023): \$60,370
- 💰 Average hourly pay in NC: \$25.56

(According to Association of Surgical Technologists North Carolina)

HELPING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GET COLLEGE READY

The College is opening new doors for high school students with the launch of Craven Achievers, a premier dual-enrollment cohort program at New Bern High School. Designed to provide an unparalleled head start on the college journey, this initiative allows participants to earn up to 26 college credits toward an associate in arts or science degree before graduating high school.

"Craven Achievers isn't just about earning college credit—it's about building confidence, finding direction, and proving to students that their future starts now," said Zomar Peter, Associate Vice President for Students. "We're removing barriers and opening doors to higher education while students are still in high school."

Craven Achievers offers significant financial benefits, with scholarships covering the cost of books, tuition, and fees, along with exclusive scholarship opportunities for students who choose to continue their studies at Craven after high school. The dual-credit format means students earn both high school and college credits simultaneously, putting them on a fast track to graduation.

Beyond academics, the program provides comprehensive support, including personalized academic advising, career guidance, and weekly tutoring sessions for challenging courses. Credits earned through the program seamlessly transfer to four-year universities across the state. Students receive special recognition for their achievements, including a Craven Achievers cord at graduation, setting them apart as they embark on their higher education path.

SPEEDING UP SUCCESS WITH ACCELERATED COURSES

Earlier this year, Craven CC launched "Accelerate in 8," a new initiative designed to provide students with a flexible and accelerated pathway to completing their associate degrees. Recognizing that every student's journey and schedule are unique, the College now offers a significant portion of its curriculum in a dynamic eight-week course format.

"Accelerate in 8 was built for students who want flexibility without compromising quality," said Katrina Bishop, Dean of Arts and Sciences. "Whether you're balancing work, family, or just looking to finish faster, this format empowers you to take control of your schedule and make real progress, eight weeks at a time."

The eight-week format delivers the same high-quality education and comprehensive support as traditional 16-week courses but within a condensed timeframe. This accelerated pace is achieved by focusing on fewer courses at a time—typically two to three, compared to the four to six courses often taken in a standard semester.

This initiative is a good fit for self-motivated and disciplined individuals eager to accelerate their degree completion or prepare for transfer to a four-year university. It also provides flexibility for students balancing significant responsibilities such as work, family, or active-duty military service.

BSH LAUNCHES ENGINEERING WORK-STUDY PROGRAM

In partnership with long-time partner BSH Home Appliances, Craven CC recently celebrated the launch of a new work-study program. This initiative is specifically designed for students in the NC State Havelock Engineering Program, offering a direct pathway from education to employment.

BSH Home Appliances hired two inaugural interns—Ethan McLawhorn (mechanical engineering) and Derek Sireci (electrical engineering)—who will train and work at the company for the next three years while completing their studies. The program aims to retain these students as full-time engineers upon their graduation.

This partnership represents a significant achievement for the NC State engineering program in Havelock and highlights BSH's substantial commitment to developing local talent. Going forward, BSH intends to hire students the summer before they officially begin their studies with NC State, creating a seamless transition directly from Craven's Havelock campus into this valuable work-study opportunity.



The College celebrates the new BSH Engineering Work-Study program for Craven CC NC State Havelock Engineering students in May. Pictured left to right: Ricky Meadows, Dean of the Havelock Campus; Michelle Pitman, NC State Student Services; Derek Sireci, electrical engineering student; Ethan McLawhorn, mechanical engineering student; Dr. Bill Fortney, NC State Havelock Engineering Program Director; and Nathan Rowland, Assistant Program Director.

NEW GENERAL OCCUPATIONAL TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Last fall, the College launched a new General Occupational Technology (GOT) program. This innovative curriculum offers a flexible path for students to enhance their skills and earn a customized associate degree, diploma, or certificate. The GOT program allows students to select courses tailored to their specific occupational interests and needs, drawing from Craven's wide array of course offerings. Graduates will be better prepared for career advancement and qualified for diverse entry-level employment opportunities.

SUMMER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM SETS SAIL

This summer, Craven embarked on a new apprenticeship journey with "Charting Your Course," an annual five-week program designed to equip rising high school seniors and recent graduates with valuable skills and career insights.

This free initiative provided participants with hands-on learning across various fields, including trades, health sciences, and industrial careers, while also honing soft skills vital for the modern workforce.

The program's goal is to empower students with career-ready skills to enhance their employability and introduce them to the variety of opportunities across high-demand fields. Students participated in hands-on activities that provided crucial knowledge of workplace safety protocols and a broad understanding of various occupations, directly connecting them with potential local job opportunities.

Upon successful completion of the intensive five-week experience, each participant received a \$500 success stipend to acknowledge their dedication. They also gained two work-based college credits, which are applicable toward multiple degree-granting or workforce credential programs at Craven CC. Additionally, all graduates earned a valuable OSHA workforce credential, further boosting their resumes.

The apprenticeship, which will run each summer, offers a diverse learning environment across Craven CC's New Bern, Havelock, and Volt Center campuses. Activities range from engaging classroom sessions to practical experience on an industrial plant floor and the College's advanced simulation labs.



The College's new Charting Your Course apprenticeship allows participants to gain hands-on experience with various in-demand fields, including Automotive and Welding.

EXPANDING PRACTICAL NURSING & COSMETOLOGY

Beginning in Fall 2024, the College significantly expanded access to in-demand careers by launching evening options for its Practical Nursing (PN) and Cosmetology programs. These additions directly address the high demand in both fields and offer crucial flexibility for working students.

The new evening PN program was specifically designed for individuals balancing full-time employment with their education. Developed in partnership with CarolinaEast Health System, this initiative responds to the challenges shared by employees struggling to balance demanding work schedules with traditional daytime nursing coursework.

"The traditional PN program was previously a full-time, daytime commitment across three semesters," explained Dr. Alec Newton, Associate Vice President for Instruction. "That's a large commitment for someone working full time. So, we needed an option for those already in the health field who want to become nurses but can't take the traditional path."

To accommodate working students, the program spans four semesters with Saturday clinicals, enabling them to pursue their nursing education without sacrificing employment. Further showing its commitment, CarolinaEast Health System fully sponsored nine employees in the inaugural evening cohort, who have committed to two years of post-graduation employment at the hospital. The program began with a full cohort of 16 students, mirroring the day program's size for an ideal instructor-to-student ratio.



Craven's Practical Nursing and Cosmetology programs now offer expanded hours, allowing more flexibility for student schedules.

“

We needed an option for students already in the health field who want to become nurses but can't take the traditional path.

— Dr. Alec Newton
*Associate Vice President
for Instruction*

”

Craven also introduced an evening Cosmetology program, offering students the flexibility to earn credits toward a certificate or diploma at a part-time pace. This expansion became possible after the College's Barbering Concepts program moved into its own dedicated space, freeing up classroom availability. Although it takes twice as long as the daytime cohort, the evening program provides an opportunity for working students to enter the cosmetology field, an option previously unavailable. Five students enrolled in the inaugural evening program.

Craven, UNCW 'STEP-IN' TO SUPPORT FUTURE EDUCATORS

Craven CC and the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) have officially launched a groundbreaking partnership aimed at cultivating the next generation of educators right here in Eastern North Carolina. Signed this past June, the Secondary Teacher Education Partnership Initiative, or STEP-IN, offers a streamlined and accessible pathway for aspiring teachers.

Under the STEP-IN program, students can earn their associate in arts or science degree from Craven CC. UNCW then provides all remaining courses online, allowing students to pursue their bachelor's degree without having to relocate. A significant benefit is the ability for students to complete their student teaching placements locally, eliminating the need for costly housing and travel.

This partnership directly addresses North Carolina's teacher shortage, particularly benefitting students in rural areas who might otherwise face barriers to pursuing higher education and licensure. By bringing quality teacher preparation directly to students' doorsteps, the STEP-IN initiative not only supports individual aspirations but also strengthens the local educational workforce. 🌟



A close-up, low-angle shot of an American flag waving in the foreground. The flag is attached to a wooden pole with a green and white striped ribbon. In the background, many other American flags are visible, creating a field of flags effect. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the flag in the foreground.

FIELD OF FLAGS

**A New Legacy Unfurls
for Student Veterans**

Craven students and employees helped plant nearly 1,200 American flags in the ground at Union Point Park last Veterans Day. Small paper tags with the names of service members were tied to each of the flags, blanketing the ground in a patriotic memorial of red, white, and blue that seemed to breathe with the breeze as it rolled off the Trent River.

This annual tradition, known as the Field of Flags, was started by the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 886 as a fundraiser to benefit local veterans. Growing from 100 flags in the first year, the program reached a new milestone this year as Craven's new Student Veterans Association (SVA) chapter and the College adopted the event as a fundraiser for veteran scholarships.

"Being a part of Field of Flags this year has been an honor for the SVA," said SVA President Logan Previglian. "This event holds such a great significance for our local community, the veterans themselves, and their families."

The VVA has long championed the needs of veterans, ensuring their voices and experiences are recognized within the broader community. Established in 1978 by Vietnam veterans, VVA remains the only national veterans organization of its kind with a congressional charter. Chapter 886, originally known as Down East Veterans, became part of VVA in 2001. Since then, it has been dedicated to honoring the legacy of Vietnam veterans, supporting fellow service members, and actively engaging in patriotic and community-driven events.

"This is probably the greatest project I've ever worked on," said Bruce Van Apeldoorn, VVA Chapter 886 president. "The first year was roughly 100 flags, and a few years later, here we are approaching 1,200 flags. We are enjoying working with the SVA, and we're very happy with what's going to happen in the future."

VVA accepts donations for the Field of Flags throughout the year, allowing individuals to purchase a flag and put someone's name on it. These donations were previously used to help general needs for area veterans but will now be more focused on helping fund student scholarships. Their goal is to assist veterans transitioning from military to civilian life, leveraging their skills to contribute to the College and community.

SVA Vice President Ryan Lozano added, "If you went and you said the oath to defend our country—and you know some of those people lost their lives, unfortunately, or were prisoners of war—this is a really good way to recognize that oath and that effort that was put into the military."

The SVA, which is a chapter of the Student Veterans of America®, helped plant the flags on Nov. 1 and made the partnership official during a signing event on Nov. 8. SVA President Previglian, Craven CC President Dr. Ray Staats, and representatives from VVA Chapter 886 were present for the signing.

“

Being a part of Field of Flags this year has been an honor for the SVA. This event holds such a great significance for our local community, the veterans themselves, and their families.

— Logan Previglian
SVA President

”

"Getting our students involved in this partnership allows us to have that passing of history from older generations into our newer generations," said Staats. "I think it's very important for our country—there are less veterans than there were during the Cold War ... so there are less veterans to pass that legacy onto. It's very important that we play an active role in that as part of our educational programs."



College employees, students in Craven's SVA chapter, and VVA Chapter 886 members participate in the Field of Flags event.



VVA Chapter 886 member Gary Gillette and his service dog, Stormy, plant flags in the ground during the Field of Flags event.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

Craven's partnership with the VVA also included the "Salute to Our Veterans" dedication ceremony held in Ward Hall on July 29, 2024. Working in collaboration with VVA members Dobert Owsley, Jack Olmstead, Joe Schulties, and Van Apeldoorn, as well as the SVA and Craven CC Veterans Affairs Coordinator Philly Solano, a memorial was dedicated to recognize student veterans for their significant contributions to the community.

"We are very proud to display that legacy in a prominent place in our college," said Staats. "Students past and present can look and remember the contributions and sacrifices a very select group of Americans chose to make on behalf of their country, and we can show our gratitude to those who have done that."

The ceremony included the unveiling of a new plaque that recognizes all six branches of the armed forces and the VVA's founding principle: "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

The Salute to Our Veterans project and the Field of Flags event were championed by Captain Dobert Owsley, former VVA 886 president. An additional dedication was added to the commemorative wall for Owsley after his passing in January. 🇺🇸



Chris Previglian, US Army veteran and husband of Craven SVA Chapter President Logan Previglian, hands out flags during the Field of Flags event at Union Point Park.



Members of the VVA Chapter 886 stand in front of the College's "Salute to Our Veterans" wall display in Ward Hall.

COMMUNITY FABRIC AWARDS

The Community Fabric Awards hosted its 15th annual ceremony at the Riverfront Convention Center of Craven County on April 29 to a crowd of approximately 500 people. Presented by the Craven Community College Foundation, the event recognizes individuals and businesses that have shown outstanding initiative, impact of service, and inspiration of others.



GARY BALDREE
Individual Leadership Award

New Bern native Gary Baldree is widely recognized for his family's tire and auto business, established in 1962. He expanded the business to Havelock, where he now works with his son and three grandsons. Baldree dedicated 21 years to the Craven CC Board of Trustees, including one term as chair, playing a pivotal role in local education. His leadership extends to the Harold H. Bate Foundation, where he reviews grant requests and champions student success. He's also deeply involved in the community, with decades of Rotary service, leadership in local chambers of commerce, and youth-focused initiatives like the Interact Club. Baldree attributes his accomplishments to his father's strong work ethic and integrity, combined with his mother's warmth and generosity, which continue to inspire him.



ROBINSON AND STITH INSURANCE
Business Leadership Award

Robinson and Stith Insurance, a family-run agency established in 1905, has been a beacon of business leadership and exceptional service in Eastern North Carolina for over a century. With offices in New Bern and Greenville, they are renowned for their integrity and community commitment. Offering comprehensive insurance for home, auto, business, life, and health, Robinson and Stith prioritizes client connection with a signature "no voicemail" policy, ensuring customers always speak to a real person. Led by Jimmy Robinson, alongside Johnny Robinson, Jim Robinson, and Dusty Throckmorton, the agency builds lasting relationships founded on trust and care. This customer-first approach consistently earns community accolades, showing that Robinson and Stith Insurance is more than a business—it's a legacy of leadership, service, and heart.



CATHERINE ALLIGOOD
Education Leadership Award

Catherine Alligood never planned to be a teacher like her mother. Her initial college path was medical technology, but a passion for science and working with people led her to education. From science classrooms to school leadership, she has spent her career inspiring students across Eastern North Carolina. Now in her ninth year as principal of Bangert Elementary, Alligood's career includes teaching in Pamlico, Wake, and Craven counties in roles including STEM project manager and assistant principal. Her greatest joy comes from seeing former students succeed as adults. She believes strong leadership in schools is more important than ever, especially amid funding concerns. Despite challenges, she is proud of the deep community connections her school continues to build, recognizing that its impact extends far beyond school walls.

The **Community Fabric Awards** have **raised** over **\$600,000** since starting in **2011**



DEEP ROOTS, STRONG FUTURES



Celebrating 60 Years

Craven's yearlong celebration of "Deep Roots, Strong Futures" culminated on July 1, 2025 with a 60th anniversary Open House on the New Bern campus. Opening its doors to a community of students, alumni, staff, teachers, parents, and more, Craven hosted the event to share the College's past, present, and future opportunities.

"We are here to serve Craven County," said Dr. Ray Staats, Craven CC President. "We are here to serve our students, and we are incredibly proud to do that. We have 60 years' worth of roots, and we have an incredibly strong future ahead of us."

As visitors arrived on campus, they were welcomed with a 60th anniversary banner and directed toward Ward Hall, where they encountered a beautifully preserved 1965 Ford Thunderbird that was purchased for the 60th anniversary, parades, and community events. Once inside, visitors were greeted with over 50 tables representing Craven's academic and workforce programs, as well as advisors, student services, financial aid assistance, and the College's Student Veterans Association chapter. The room was alive with the hum of 3-D printers, lifelike mannequins from Health Sciences, music from the 3CGC gospel choir, and free massages and haircuts.

The 60th anniversary was well represented with anniversary cupcakes, a table with Craven memorabilia, videos playing of moments in the College's history, and a customized time capsule that was built by machining students. The capsule was filled with notes from students and employees, a baseball signed by all the players on Craven's champion Panthers baseball team, T-shirts, a branded photo album signed by people attending the Open House, and much more. The time capsule was closed at the end of the event and is scheduled to be reopened in 10 years for Craven's 70th anniversary celebration.

Open House officially marked the end of Craven's yearlong diamond anniversary celebration. The College kicked off the campaign in August 2024 during convocation, which included 60th-themed giveaways for employees and emeriti. Other events throughout the year included PantherFest, Black History Month, Community Fabric Awards, Founders' Day, John Brown Big Band concert, graduation, and an exhibition baseball game between the New Bern Southpaws and Craven's World Series champions (see page 24).

Craven also celebrated the 60th with a new logo and slogan, historical and anniversary posts on social

“

We are here to serve Craven County. We are here to serve our students, and we are incredibly proud to do that. We have 60 years' worth of roots, and we have an incredibly strong future ahead of us.

— Dr. Ray Staats
President

”

media, a fundraising campaign with the Foundation, video interviews with three of the College's presidents, and a microsite at CravenCC.edu/60 that was created to preserve the College's history.

LOOKING BACK

As Craven CC concludes its 60th anniversary celebration, it's fitting to look back—not just at what we've become, but how we began.

On August 15, 1961, Dr. Thurman Brock sat down at a small desk with nothing more than a pencil, a legal pad, and a vision, and began his first day as the inaugural Director of Vocational Education for Craven County Schools. His role, one of only a handful in North Carolina at the time, was a signal of things to come.

In partnership with the Lenoir County Industrial Education Center in Kinston, Brock helped launch the county's first vocational classes at Brinson Memorial School: Basic Electronics and Blueprint Reading. Ironically, those blueprints did more than teach—they outlined the foundation for what would become Craven Community College.

By 1963, as North Carolina created its statewide community college system, Craven County was already laying the groundwork. Practical Nursing classes began downtown at the old St. Luke's Hospital, and a local advisory board led by Lynn Kelso started shaping plans for a college of its own.

The dream gained momentum. In 1965, Craven Industrial Education Center was formally chartered. In just one year, the program served more than 1,500 students. Outgrowing one location after another, from St. Luke's to the Harvey Mansion, the community came together to support a \$5.5 million bond referendum that would fund a permanent campus and a new future.

CELEBRATING OUR HISTORY

On July 1, 1965, the NC General Assembly creates Craven County Unit of Lenoir County Community College (LCCC).



On Dec. 5, 1967, Craven County voters approve a \$5.5 million bond referendum for the independent Craven County Technical Institute (CCTI).



The College officially breaks ground on the New Bern campus on Nov. 12, 1969.

1965

1966

1967

1968

1969



Craven Unit of LCCC relocates to 223 Tryon Palace Drive. Steve Redd is hired as third full-time employee under founding president Dr. Thurman Brock.



Founder's Day begins as first Board of Trustees meeting is held April 23, 1968, with board chairman Lynn Kelso.

The Craven Board of Trustees vote on July 9, 1968, to purchase 100 acres of property on Racetrack Road, which would eventually become the New Bern campus.



Instructors Bob Husson and Valeria Truitt offer the College's first online courses.



The basketball team, coached by Si Seymour, beats the UNC Chapel Hill junior varsity team.

Dr. Lewis Redd serves as interim president until June 1990, when the State Board confirms his selection as the College's second president.

1999

1998

1997

1996

1995

1994

1993

1992

1991

1990

Perdue Hall is completed, providing space for science labs, the nursing program, accounting, and office systems technology.



Craven's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society chapter, Alpha Phi Nu, is chartered.

The College's men's basketball team participates in the National Junior College Athletic Association (1980-2000) and reaches the Sweet 16.



Dr. Scott Ralls becomes Craven's third president.



Craven Early College is established at the New Bern campus, and classes begin in Fall 2006.



Dr. Catherine Chew becomes Craven's fourth president on Oct. 1, 2008.

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009



The Havelock campus, including the new Institute of Aeronautical Technology, is dedicated on Nov. 11, 2003.



The Lifetime Learning Center begins with Claude Monet as the central theme.

Construction of the Business & Information Technology (later named Bate Hall) building and Bosch and Siemens Advanced Manufacturing Center is completed.

Craven celebrates its 60th anniversary on July 1, 2025.



Panthers baseball team wins the Division III World Series in Butler, Pa. on May 18.

The Business & Information Technology building is dedicated as "Bate Hall" in honor of the Harold H. Bate Foundation.



Student Center is dedicated as "Ward Hall" in honor of David L. Ward, Jr.'s 52 years of service as the College's first General Counsel.

The Craven County Commission and the College sign 40-year lease of 30 acres at the Craven Industrial Park for a new Public Safety Training Center campus.

2025

2024

2023



Y... SHAPING OUR FUTURE



The newly accredited CTI completes its first academic year with 382 curriculum students during the fall quarter.

Dean of Industrial Technologies Jerry Prescott chairs a committee to write specifications for the Student Center building (later named Ward Hall) addition.



Leander Morgan, former Craven CC administrator and three-time New Bern mayor, supports efforts to gain a \$600,000 Economic Development Administration grant for the Learning Resources Center building (later named Barker Hall).

1970

1971

1972

1973

1974

1975

1976

1977

1978

1979



In April 1971, employees and CTI students make the physical move from Tryon Palace Drive to Racetrack Road.

The State Board of Education grants community college status – Craven Community College becomes a reality.



A physical education project, including tennis courts, is started and the Student Center is completed.

The Craven CC Foundation is formed on April 15, 1977, to enhance Craven CC's educational mission through community fundraising.



Bids are awarded for two new buildings, an auditorium and machining lab, later to be named Orringer Hall and Kelso Hall.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaffirms Craven's accreditation status.



WTEB 89.5 starts broadcasting from the New Bern campus on June 4, 1984.



Craven CC joins New Bern Chamber of Commerce in January 1980.

Board of Trustees agrees to Dr. Redd's plan to offer daytime curriculum programs for the Havelock-Cherry Point area.

1989

1988

1987

1986

1985

1984

1983

1982

1981

1980

Dr. Brock, Craven's first president, retires on Dec. 31, 1989.



The concurrent enrollment of high school students in vocational curricula begins as the Step Ahead Program, an early version of today's dual enrollment program.

The College begins operating classroom facilities at the East Plaza Professional Center in Havelock.



The Early College of Eastern Applied Science and Technology (EAST) opens to serve students on the Havelock campus.

The first cohort of Mechanical Engineering Systems students in the NC State Havelock Engineering Program graduate in May.



The College celebrates its 50th anniversary on July 1. Dr. Ray Staats becomes the College's fifth president on July 20.



Hurricane Florence makes landfall Sept. 14, causing catastrophic damage throughout the region. The College is closed for three weeks as students, faculty, staff, and the community begin recovery efforts.

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

The Craven CC Foundation's inaugural Community Fabric Awards event is held in April.



Students in Craven's first Barbering Concepts program graduate.



The renovated Godwin Memorial Library & Testing Center opens on the New Bern campus.

Veterans Memorial Park is dedicated on the Havelock campus on Nov. 9.

The Volt Center, Craven's first campus dedicated to workforce development training, opens in May.

Craven's Associate Degree in Nursing and Practical Nursing programs are accredited by the National League for Nursing, Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation.



The STEM Center is dedicated as the fourth building on the Havelock campus in January.

Craven CC closes for two weeks beginning March 14 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Curriculum courses transition to online classes for the rest of the semester.



2022

2021

2020

(Our history continues on page 37) ►

Beyond the Classroom: PTK Drives Change for Local Youth and Students

Craven CC's Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Alpha Phi Nu chapter made a significant impact in December with a highly successful Foster Care Donation Drive, collecting an astounding 2,332 items for foster children in Craven County. The initiative aimed to provide comfort and encourage resilience among foster children, who often face challenging and traumatic experiences.

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by these children, including a lack of belongings and essential resources, Alpha Phi Nu conducted thorough research to identify the most impactful contributions. Working closely with the HOPE Family Resource Center and various college departments, PTK advisors and officers organized a donation drive that turned giving into a friendly competition.

Participants formed teams, competing for the chance to win a free Dunkin' breakfast. This spirited contest encouraged widespread participation and resulted in a significant collection of much-needed items including duffel bags, clothing, hygiene products, and other necessities. The incredible generosity of the Craven CC family made this drive a resounding success.

PTK members also identified another critical need within the academic community: addressing period poverty. Recognizing its significant impact on student attendance and wellbeing, students organized a dedicated donation drive for menstrual products. They then set up small stations in main bathrooms across the New Bern campus. These discreet stations, accompanied by informative flyers about other free period products and resources, aim to provide immediate access and destigmatize menstrual health, allowing students to focus on their education without unnecessary stress.

Period poverty significantly impacts teens in academia, leading to missed classes for 84% of students (or someone they know) and causing two-thirds to feel stressed due to lack of access to menstrual products. Additionally, 79% feel they lack proper menstrual health education, and 66% prefer not to be at school during their period.

Through these initiatives, Craven's Alpha Phi Nu chapter exemplifies its commitment to empowering both the broader Craven County community and its own student body, creating an environment of support and wellbeing.



Faculty advisors and students in Craven CC's Phi Theta Kappa Alpha Phi Nu chapter gather donations for local foster children.

Volt Center Among myFutureNC's 2025 Champions for Attainment

In February, the Volt Center was recognized as one of five 2025 Champions for Attainment by myFutureNC, a significant achievement highlighting its dedication to expanding education access, success, and completion for adult learners across Eastern North Carolina. This honor was bestowed during the myFutureNC State of Educational Attainment event.

North Carolina has made notable strides in increasing educational attainment, adding nearly 215,000 credentialed workers since 2019 and reducing the projected shortfall. However, challenges persist in strengthening early education pathways, increasing adult education and completion, and ensuring degrees or credentials align with workforce demands.

The Volt Center's recognition highlights the College's vital role in regional economic development and its commitment to these statewide goals. The event emphasized evidence-based solutions, including expanding scholarships for high-demand jobs, enhancing support grants, improving college transfer transparency, and investing in local educational attainment initiatives.



The Volt Center holds numerous community events that expose local students and community members to a variety of trades programs and career opportunities.

Emeritus Class of 2025

Craven CC's College Emeritus program recognizes faculty and staff who have made exceptional contributions toward fulfilling the College's mission and vision during a long, distinguished career as a College employee.

There were three members of the 2025 class: Kate Amerson (faculty emeritus), Eddie Foster (dean emeritus), and Gale Evancho (staff emeritus). Each was officially recognized during the 58th annual commencement ceremony.

KATE AMERSON joined the College in 1995, becoming full-time history and humanities faculty in 2000. She earned the College's Faculty Excellence Award in 2003. From 2009 until her December 2024 retirement, she advised the Phi Theta Kappa chapter, Alpha Phi Nu, elevating it to five-star status for 15 years. Her Honors in Action projects continue to benefit the College and community. Kate also received the 2019 Craven CC Foundation Community Fabric Award for Leadership in Education.



EDDIE FOSTER retired in January 2025 after over 20 years in the NC Community College System, with 15 years at Craven CC. He joined in 2010 as Director of Customized Training and Safety, became the inaugural director of the Volt Center in 2019, then dean in 2022. He played a pivotal role in establishing the Volt Center as a premier workforce development hub, greatly benefiting students and regional economic development. Eddie also received the 2024 Community Fabric Award for Leadership in Education.



GALE EVANCHO started as secretary to the academic deans in 1996, transitioning to Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Instruction in 2010, where she remained for the majority of her career. A community college graduate herself, Gale was the College's go-to for virtually every aspect of curriculum planning, administration, System Office processes, and program evaluations. She retired in December 2022 but actively participates in a variety of College and community events and activities.





Stepping Up to the Plate

Craven Panthers Baseball Team Celebrates 60th Anniversary with Historic World Series Win

The Panthers baseball team added an unforgettable chapter to Craven's 60-year history this season by clinching the College's first-ever World Series Championship. The National Club Baseball Association (NCBA) Division III World Series title came after No. 4 seed Panthers toppled No. 2 seed Robert Morris University with a 9-6 win on May 18.

"We put up eight runs in the first inning," said Panthers head coach Jimmy Griffiths. "It was just a snowball effect, and we piled it on. We got a little rocky and they got in striking distance later on, but we tacked on some runs and won the championship."

Panthers third baseman John Freeman set the pace early in the final game, delivering a crucial 3-RBI triple in the bottom of the first inning, propelling the Panthers to a lead they would maintain throughout the game. This was complemented by a top-notch performance from freshman right-hander Rusty Haswell, who pitched 5.2 innings, allowing only one hit and one run while striking out eight batters, effectively shutting down Robert Morris and securing the championship victory.

Held May 16-18 in Butler, Pennsylvania, the World Series was a double-elimination tournament that began with Craven taking a 10-1 victory over the top-seeded Dickinson.

"They were the No. 1-ranked team in the country and the tournament," added Griffiths. "So, when the other teams watched us win, you could see the other teams saw a changing of the guard. After that, they looked concerned when they saw us coming."

Craven's underdog story was threatened in the tournament's second game as the Panthers fell to Robert Morris 5-3.

"They were a good team, and we started flat," said Griffiths. "We started to wake up around the end of the game. (Panthers assistant) coach Tyler pulled everybody and said, 'If we want to stay, we have to win tonight. Figure it out.' And they did."

The Panthers rallied for a 7-2 victory over University of Wisconsin Stevens Point on Saturday afternoon, setting up a dominating 19-0 shutout against Robert Morris on Sunday morning. T.J. Jones led the charge, going 4-for-5 with a double, triple, and 5 RBIs, while pitcher Damon McAnallen kept the door shut for six innings with six strikeouts and no runs.

"We put a little bit of a different game plan together," said Griffiths. "It paid off 19-0, and 22 hits is unheard of. That's the one that put us in a do-or-die game."

Craven's dominating performance over Stevens Point set the stage for what would become a championship showdown against Robert Morris.

The Panthers earned their trip to the World Series after winning the District II Regional Championship. Tournament play included a 5-0 win over George Mason and a commanding 15-7 victory over Gardner-Webb.



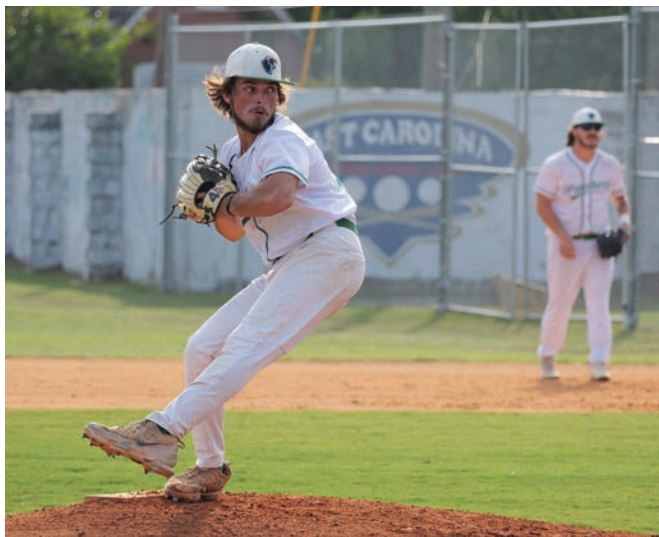
The Craven Panthers baseball team celebrates their record-breaking victory over Robert Morris in the Division III World Series.

In the championship game, pitcher Landon Smith sealed the 6-4 win over the Richmond Spiders with a strikeout to end the game. Other standout players in the tournament included Kyle Criner with six runs scored and five stolen bases, as well as Edward Smith notching a win in game two of the playoffs with five strikeouts and no earned runs.

Craven finished the season at 5-3 in NCBA District II South Conference play and 15-5 overall, including an impressive 7-0 undefeated streak at home.

Both historic wins in the regional and national championships mark the first time a community college baseball team has made it to an NCBA World Series, as well as the first Regional and World Series appearances and titles in the Panthers baseball club history.





Panthers pitcher Rusty Haswell winds up for a pitch during the 60th anniversary exhibition game on June 9.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY ON THE DIAMOND

The Panthers continued the College's diamond anniversary celebrations with one more trip to the baseball diamond during the 60th anniversary game at Kafer Park in downtown New Bern. This final exhibition game of the season against the Southpaws gave Panther fans one last chance to celebrate the team's World Series victory.

The game included a first pitch and comments from Dr. Ray Staats, Craven CC President, as well as special appearances by Craven mascot Blaze the Panther and a national anthem sung by Jasmine Bridges of Craven's 3CGC Gospel Choir.

"As we continue to celebrate our 60th anniversary, this national championship adds an extra layer of pride and excitement," said Staats. "We are thrilled to bring the community together to celebrate this historic achievement by our Panthers baseball team. This event is a fantastic way to honor their incredible accomplishment while enjoying an evening of baseball and community spirit." 🐾

🏆 TEAM HISTORY 🏆

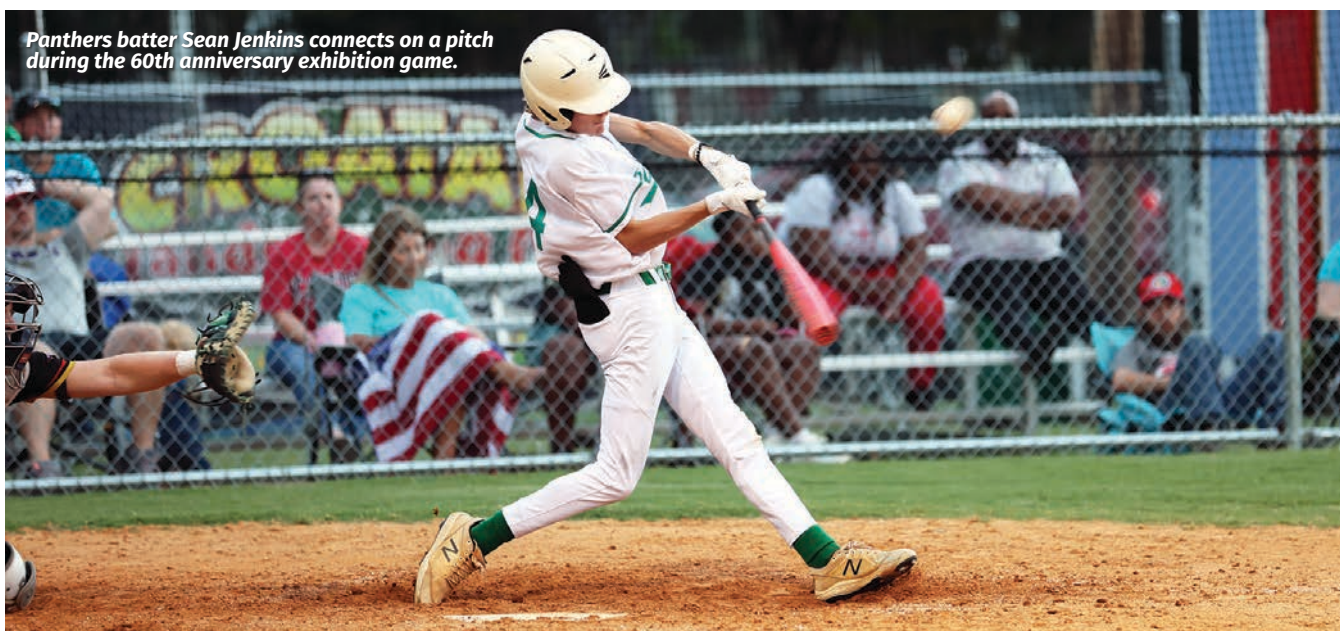
Former student Joe Corachi developed Craven Community College's first club team in 2001. The Panthers eventually joined the National Club Baseball Association (NCBA), a national governing body for collegiate club baseball that includes Division I universities and community colleges alike.

Coach Griffiths joined the team 10 years later as a statistician and officially took the helm in 2012 as the head coach. In addition to coaching at Craven, Griffiths is on the coaching staff at East Carteret High School, where he helped lead the Mariners to a Coastal Plains 1A/2A Conference Championship and a 26-1 season in 2025.

Craven's roster includes high school graduates from public and private schools located in Carteret, Craven, and Onslow counties. The recent World Series win has created buzz that may open that range even further in the 2025-2026 season.

"I've been getting phone calls from the Dominican Republic, Chicago, New York," said Griffiths. "Who knows what the future holds."

To learn more about the Panthers baseball team, visit CravenCC.edu/Baseball.



Panthers batter Sean Jenkins connects on a pitch during the 60th anniversary exhibition game.

EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

Craven Community College's annual Excellence Awards recognize the exceptional work of employees who go above and beyond their day-to-day duties at work and in the community



"My favorite part of the job is seeing students recognize their potential when they finally see themselves as 'that nurse,' encouraging them to keep going, and reminding them that success isn't about speed but perseverance. It's a marathon that requires heart, consistency, grace, self-care, and resilience."

DR. DOROTHY "PEARL" HIGGINS
FACULTY EXCELLENCE

Pearl's journey into the field of nursing was sparked by an innate desire to serve and make a difference through compassionate care. This ultimately led her to nursing education, where she found joy in shaping future nurses. She believes her biggest accomplishment is earning her Doctor of Nursing Practice with an Emphasis in Educational Leadership, which symbolizes perseverance and inspires others to pursue their educational aspirations. She joined the College in 2020 as an adjunct clinical instructor and became full-time nursing faculty in 2023. Her favorite part of teaching is watching her students start believing in themselves, recognize their potential, and envision themselves as nurses.



"There's nothing more rewarding than helping others build brighter futures and honoring the roots that define me. The true joy comes from witnessing those we've helped take pride in their own growth and success and watching them give back to this community."

CHRISTINA BOWMAN-MURRAY
STAFF EXCELLENCE

Throughout her life, Christina's compassionate spirit and dedication to community have been a driving force. She began her journey at Craven CC as a student, serving two years as a work study and one as Interim Campus Life Coordinator, then three as Small Business Center Assistant, and now five as Foundation Assistant Director. Her mission is to pay forward the opportunities that shaped her educational journey and give back to the community in which she grew up. Her proudest achievement is supporting over 2,210 students last year alone and helping them build brighter futures. Her greatest joy comes from witnessing those she's helped take pride in their own growth and success and watching them give back.



"Nothing compares to the happiness I feel helping my students achieve their artistic goals. Many of my students are exploring new techniques and concepts for the first time, and witnessing their growth is incredibly rewarding."

MAIRIN NARRON
ADJUNCT FACULTY
EXCELLENCE

Mairin's calling for art and education emerged early in her artistic journey. Her path to teaching began during her own art studies, where she discovered the joy of collaborative learning. This solidified in graduate school, as teaching freshman courses revealed her true passion: combining art with inspiring others' creative journeys. She considers this award the most fulfilling and deeply validating honor to receive relatively early in her career. She joined Craven in Spring 2023 and finds immense joy in helping students achieve their artistic goals. Witnessing their exploration of new techniques and concepts and seeing their excitement and growth is the most fulfilling aspect of her career.

foundation support

FUNDING STUDENT SUCCESS

The Craven CC Foundation and its donors helped a record-breaking number of more than 2,820 students realize their educational dreams over the past academic year. Your donations have a real impact, allowing our community to grow stronger with each graduating student. Together, we can turn aspirations into accomplishments, ignite potentials, and invest in dreams. Learn more at CravenCC.edu/Foundation, 252-638-7351, or scan the QR code.



Whittenburg Foundation Donates \$10K to Health Sciences Students

In February, the Craven CC Foundation received a \$10,000 donation from the Dereck Whittenburg Foundation. The funds will directly benefit students in Craven's Nursing and Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) programs, helping them pursue their dreams of entering the healthcare profession and serving the community. This will significantly reduce financial barriers for aspiring nurses and PTAs.

Funds were raised during a celebrity golf tournament in November, organized by Robinson and Stith Insurance. As Craven CC celebrates 60 years of educational excellence, support from these community partners strengthens our foundation and paves the way for a brighter future.



The Whittenburg Foundation presents the Craven CC Foundation, Health Sciences staff, and students with \$10,000.

International Paper Donation Allows Panther Pantry Expansion

Last November, International Paper, a long-time partner of Craven CC, donated \$5,000 to the Panther Pantry to combat food insecurity. These funds allowed the pantry to purchase a new deep freezer and expand services to all three campus locations: New Bern, Havelock, and the Volt Center.

The need for the Panther Pantry is urgent in Craven County, where over 14% of residents live below the poverty line and more than 60% of students receive financial assistance. Many continue to struggle with basic needs due to rising living expenses, especially after events like hurricanes Florence, Dorian, Helene, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Panther Pantry is more than a food bank—it's a student-centered service that empowers students to focus on their studies and work toward a brighter future by directly addressing hunger.

Gene Haas Foundation Fuels Future Machinists with \$14K Donation

The College received a significant boost to its machining program in December 2024 thanks to a \$14,000 donation from the Gene Haas Foundation. This contribution will provide crucial scholarships for students pursuing careers in machining, directly supporting their educational journey.

The Gene Haas Foundation has a strong relationship with Craven CC and the local community. This donation further demonstrates their commitment to training and hiring skilled labor in the region. The Haas Foundation has demonstrated its ongoing support for the College's Career & Technical Programs with over \$34,000 in donations since 2022.



The Gene Haas Foundation contributes \$14,000 to support scholarships for students in Craven CC's Machining program.

Students Connect with Donors

Craven CC scholarship recipients had the chance to thank their benefactors in person at the Foundation's annual donor-student luncheon in September. The event allowed students to share how scholarships have empowered them to chase their academic dreams, while donors were able to see the impact of their generosity.

The College also received an \$18,000 donation from State Employees' Credit Union to support the Bridge to Career Program, which aims to help unemployed and underemployed adults develop marketable job skills.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

For decades, Dr. Michael and Patricia Fisher have been cornerstones of the Craven County community. Their legacy now takes shape through the recently established Fisher Family Endowment, a fund set to transform countless student lives at Craven CC. This endowment is open to any program of study, ensuring students from all walks of life and career paths can benefit for generations to come.

Dr. Fisher, who served as a dentist in Craven County for 32 years, and his wife Patricia exemplify compassion and care. Their generosity continues to make a lasting impact, opening doors for students to pursue their dreams and shape brighter futures.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Steve Cella
 Dr. Jim Davis, *Vice Chair*
 Pamela Holder
 Chip Hughes
 Etteinne (ET) Mitchell
 Jennifer O'Neill
 Dr. Ervin Patrick, *Chair*
 Sandra Phelps
 Kevin Roberts
 Dr. Raymond Staats, *Secretary*,
Craven CC President
 Tabari Wallace
 Whit Whitley
 Augustus Willis

FOUNDATION BOARD

Carol Becton
 Mark W. Best
 Dr. James Congleton, III
 Charles Cushman
 Charles Dudley
 Dr. Dwight Grady
 Tyler Harris, *President*
 NaTayah Hill
 Ashley Irizarry
 Dr. Ginny Johnson
 Robert Johnson
 Carole Kemp
 Lee Knott
 Linda MacDonald, *Director Emeritus*
 John Robert Mattocks
 Dr. Bettina Meekins
 Jim Millard, *Treasurer*,
Craven CC VP for Administration
 Hannah Mitchell
 Stephen Nuckolls, *Director Emeritus*
 Dr. Ervin Patrick, *Board of Trustees Chair*
 The Honorable Beverly E. Perdue
 Anne C. Schout, *Past President*
 Karen Segal
 Terri Sharp
 Tammy Sherron, *Vice President/President Elect*
 Dr. Raymond Staats, *Craven CC President*
 Craig A. Warren
 Charles Wethington, *Secretary*,
Craven CC Executive Director
of Institutional Advancement
 Dr. Kenneth Wilkins

WE APPRECIATE OUR DONORS!

The Craven Community College Foundation continues to help thousands of students reach educational goals and new career opportunities. We appreciate your generosity and investment in each student's future as we all work together to build a stronger community.

**The following donor list includes all cash and in-kind gifts received in the 2024-2025 fiscal year (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025).*

LEGACY CIRCLE (Over \$100,000)

The Harold H. Bate Foundation

TRUSTEE'S CIRCLE (\$10,000 to \$99,999)

Allies for Cherry Point's Tomorrow
BSH Home Appliances Corporation
Diane S. Donald
Dr. Michael and Mrs. Patricia Fisher
Gene Haas Foundation
The Estate of Mr. Frederick Hager
Clay and Kathy Hodge
Dr. David M. Hurst
International Paper
Dr. Ginny and Mr. Linwood Johnson
Bob and Carol Mattocks
Neuse River Bridge Run
North Carolina Community
Foundation, Inc.
Anne and Jim Schout
The Dereck Whittenburg
Foundation for Education

FOUNDER'S CIRCLE (\$3,000 to \$9,999)

Adelaide Gurganus Jackson
Foundation
CarolinaEast Health System
Civitan Club of New Bern, Inc.
The Mike and Toni Deichmann
Charitable Fund
Dr. Edwin A. and
Mrs. Carol Sue Doty

Mr. Michael and
Mrs. Barbara Esposito
Heath Investment Group, Inc.
Home Builders Association of
Craven & Pamlico Counties
JKF Architecture
Mr. & Mrs. William P. Kemp, III
Harry and Linda MacDonald
Minges Bottling Group, Inc. - Pepsi
MOEN, Inc.
New Bern Sun Journal
News 12
Public Radio East
Robinson and Stith Insurance
Signature Wealth Strategies
South Arts, Inc.
Dr. Raymond and Mrs. Dawn Staats
Robby and Sharon Tew
Mr. Edward J. Vaupel
Ward and Smith, P.A.
Mr. and Mrs. David L. Ward, Jr.
John and Susie Ward

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE (\$1,200 to \$2,999)

Col. and Mrs. J. Fred Amend
American Legion Post 24 New Bern
Baldree's Tire of Havelock
Curtis and Susie Bare
Maj. Gen. and Mrs. Thomas A.
Braaten, USMC (Ret.)
Ms. Lisa Carpentier
Coastal Women's Forum

Dr. Jim Congleton
Craven County Independent
Insurance Agents Association, Inc.
Duke Energy
Mrs. Kathryn E. Findley
Mr. Norman and
Dr. Kathleen Gallman
Katherine and John Haroldson
Tyler and Bowden Harris
Emma Jane Huntzberry
Jane and George Kramer
Mr. Albert McClendon and
Mrs. Pamela McClendon
Mrs. Judith McCrudden and
Mr. Christopher McCrudden
Commissioner ET Mitchell,
Craven County
New Bern Rotary Club
New Bern Woman's Club
Mr. Robert Eaves and
The Honorable Beverly Perdue
Mary Cashen Purcell
Dr. John S. and Dr. Rebecca C. Riley
Denise M. Salerno
Segal Family Charities

\$3.5+
million
invested in
endowment
funds

Charles D. Smith, Jr. and
Gregg Causey
Mrs. Linda M. Taylor
The Society of 40 & 8
Mrs. Gail Chubin Tilley
Trader Construction Company
Tryon Civitan Club
Jeff and Penny Williams

DEAN'S CIRCLE **(\$600 to \$1,199)**

Aiken Wealth Management Group
Pamela Barnes and Paul Runions
Mrs. Marcia and Mr. Amos Beasley
Bender Apparel & Signs
Bengel Hospitality
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Berg
Mr. and Mrs. James and
Katrina Bishop
Russ Boyce
Mrs. Elizabeth A. Brock
Mr. Stephen Cella and
Mrs. Bridget Cella
Betty Clarke
Coastal Carolina Health Care, P.A.
Dr. Jim and Mrs. Sarah Davis
Pete and Nancy Deichmann
Mrs. Patricia A. Dunn
Eastern Carolina Aviation
Heritage Foundation
Envee Spa
First Citizens Bank
Dr. William Fortney
Bernard and Brenda George
Dr. Dwight Grady
Karen H. Grubb
Dr. Betty Hatcher
Barbara E. Keane
Bobby and Sylvia King
Dr. Jenifer R. Marquis and
Mr. Bryce Marquis
John Robert and Alison Mattocks

McFadyen Family Endowment
The Honorable W. David
McFadyen, III
Dianne and Ricky Meadows
Mr. Charles and
Dr. Bettina B. Meekins
Jim and Sharon Millard
Susan Moffat-Thomas and
John Thomas
Monte Printing
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Nuckolls
George and Betty Orsega
PBMares, LLP
Printelect/Owen G. Dunn Co.
Dr. Carolyn Sampson and
Mr. Rickey D. Stewart
Jeff and Aimee Schulze
Tammy and Scott Sherron
Karen Skipper
Linda Staunch
N. Dallas and Janet B. Sutton
Trent Cadillac Buick GMC
Cynthia L. Turco
Twin Rivers Shag Club
Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 886
Pat Voliva
Sharon Warren
Charles A. Wethington

SCHOLAR'S CIRCLE **(\$300 to \$599)**

Maureen Lou Abraham
Doug and Kate Amerson
Jim and Jennifer Baer
Nancy Barker and M. K. Hill
Dr. Keith Bennert and
Dr. Beth Benson
Robert Blais
Mary Boswell
Dr. Gery and Mrs. Stacy Boucher
Mr. Rowland L. Bowen

Emily Bray
Mr. Jeff K. Brown and
Mrs. Rae Brown
Robert and Cathy Campbell
Joe and Margaret Chance
Maureen and Jim Comer
William H. Dams
David and Angie Dysinger
Famous Restaurant and Baking Co.
Mrs. Cynthia and Mr. Paul Faucett
Flatlands Jessup Insurance Services
Fraternal Order of Police
Tri-County Lodge #52
Milt and Jennifer Gold
Cille and Lloyd Griffith
Havelock Tourist & Event Center
Heron Hospitality
Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Herron
Mr. Rob Holmes, IV
Sheriff Chip Hughes
Bob and Susan Husson
The Insurance Center
Megan and Gary Johnson
Griffin and Dylan Casseday
Mac and Sara King
George and Jane Kramer
Dr. Carmela Magliocchi-Byrnes and
Major Dominick Byrnes
Nancy and Joe Mansfield
Ginny Mattern and Randall King
Gena McKinley
Drew and Holly Meadows
Jeff and Melinda Michelson
Tommy and Greta Mitchell
Ed and Hannah Mitchell
Mrs. Pat Moser
Chris and Marie Mynster
New Bern Painting &
Construction Company
Dr. and Mrs. Alec Newton
Jamie and Laura Norment
Dr. Ervin and Dr. Eleanor Patrick
Terry and Charlotte Richardson
Allana Ross/North Group Real Estate

Over 150 active
scholarships and endowments

donor support

THANK YOU

Lynda Sadler
Reid and Terri Sharp
Philly and Samantha Solano
Nathan and Jennifer Stout
Ms. Carrie L Strait
Ms. Alexa S. Tarplee and
Pete Daughety
Kelley S, Toler, RN, MSN
Captain John P. Tristani, USMC
Truist
Mayor and Mrs. Chuck Tyson
David and Amy Wang
Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth W. Wilkins, Jr.
Earl and Hattie Best Williams
Ms. Earline Sills Williams

AMBASSADOR'S CIRCLE (\$120 to \$299)

Dwayne and Catherine Alligood
Jane Ashford
Carlton and Kimberly Banks
Laura Barnes
Carol Bonner Becton
Mr. Frederick O. Bell
Mrs. Elizabeth Bennett
Mr. Alexander J. Block
Dr. and Mrs. Stuart Blount
Julie Blythe
Gary and Darla Burchell
Jerry and Mary Carpenter
Cella Ford
Ely and Patricia Chadwick
Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Chance
Coastal Carolina Regional Airport
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Coventry
Marsha Daugherty
Mrs. Jane H. Davis
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Davis
Nicole Dunn
Ms. Alice Edwards

Maria E. Eid
Larry and Vicki Feldhaus
Lydia and Marc Finlayson
First Baptist Church Sunday School
Fisher Stores, Inc./Fisher Fuel Markets
John and Theresa Fonville
Dr. Angela Mason Foster
GH Customs Apparel and Graphics
Gibbs Dentistry
Bill and Rochelle Gibney
Bill and Lisa Green
Havelock Chamber of Commerce
Ms. Catherine Hewlette
Drs. Shelly Hines and Graham Spann
Dr. J. M. Hodges, Jr., DDS
LaShawna Humphrey
Mrs. Ashley R. Irizarry
Ms. Cheryl Jethro
Cat and Cole Johnson
Pastor and Mrs. Robert Johnson, Jr.
Kellum Law Firm
Mrs. April King and Mr. John King
Jimmie and Tharesa Lee
Linda E. Manooch
Ron and Jackie May
John and Diane McQuade
In Memory of Paul W. Miller
Jon and Mickey Miller
Patricia A. Minschew
Mitchell Hardware
Moore's BBQ
Vickie Moseley Jones
Todd Murphrey
George and Christina Murray
Mr. Michael Murrie
New Bern Chamber of Commerce
Ms. Christine D. Oaks
Ms. Leslie Olkowski
Ms. Rachel Anne Osborn

Oscar's Mortuary, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Doyle Glenn Owings
Charles and Sherry Parker
Paula's Italian Restaurant & Pizza
Diana Peebles
Dick and Patti Peebles
Mrs. Katie B. Perry and
Mr. Herbert L. Perry
GySgt and Mrs. Cleveland Peterkin
Sandra Phelps
Erin A. Racicot
Craig D. Ramey
Heath, Pati, and Patrick Riggs
Mr. John Radtke and
Mrs. Diane Russell
Dr. Edward Sabat
Mike B. Sagaser
Rev. Ethel Starkey Sampson
Dr. Jessica E. Saxon
Mrs. Rose M. Sexton
Cindy and Mark Seymour
Adam and Candice Simmons
William and Kisha Simpson
Small Batch Specialty Gifts
Amber and Jesse Smith
Twin Rivers YMCA
Ken and Diane Tyndall
United Bank
Terri Van Sickle
Mr. Douglas Walling
Ms. Sheila Weibert
Ms. Kristin White
Mrs. Kay Foley Wicker
Leigh and Greg Wilkinson
Mr. Brandon P. Williams

\$605,000+
available for
student assistance
over the **2024-25**
academic year

Newsom and Sandy Williams
Keith and Deb Williams
Nicole Williamson
Mrs. Julianne and
The Honorable Augustus Willis
Chris and Toni Wimmer

SUPPORTERS (\$10 to \$119)

Ms. Donna Alderson
Ms. Mary Ann Allmashy
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
Amital
Rudy and Joanne Ashton
Ms. Beth Atkins
Louis and Carol Balogh
Sharon M. Bellrose
Georgiana Bowman Bircher
Nicole S. Blackwell
Suzanne M. Blais
Bill and Diane Bondurant
Mrs. Susan M. Branch
Mrs. Shirley Brown
Mrs. Simone M. Brown
Angie Bryan
Ms. Sharon Margaret Bucci
Dr. Victor and Mrs. Ann Bustard
Ms. Susan Cargnino
Mr. John Collins
Bryna R. Coonin
Mrs. Betty Jo Craft and
Mr. William Craft
John and Edna Craft

Mark Dail
Joann F. DeLeo
Holly Desrosier
Dee Dricks
Mr. John Dunn
Bob and Lindy Emory
Mr. Michael Foster
Fund Development, LLC
Jeff Geibel and Johanne
Perpignand-Geibel
Ms. Pamela J. Gibbs
Mr. William Hale
Ms. Pamela Holder
Betsy G. Holmes
Howard Stallings Law Firm
Herbert Lee and Rosa Bell Perry
Memorial Scholarship
Mrs. Linda Irvin
JCC Alteration Plus
Mrs. Jennifer Marie Jones
Sara E. Jones
Cameron S. Kishel
Mr. John Joseph Klecker and
Mrs. Kathleen Cray Klecker
Mr. and Mrs. Lee Knott
Ms. Margaret Lasher
Mike and Rebecca Liberty
Dr. Murdina MacDonald
Mrs. Marilyn Maury
Ms. Bambi McCray
Mrs. Suzanne Missureli
Ms. Teri Morris

Mrs. Linda P. Muir
Mayor Jeffrey T. Odham
Ms. Jennifer L. O'Neill, MA
Amanda M. Parrino
Karen and Allen Plaster
C. H. and Elizabeth Pope
Mrs. Catherine Riggs
Mrs. Karen Roop
Mrs. Christine E. Sachs
Mary Jane Schmidt
Nicole Schoonover
Mrs. Patricia Schrader and
Mr. Robert Schrader
Michael Kingard and Jane Schussler
Ms. Ellen Sewell
Mr. Si and and Mrs. Vanita Seymour
Mrs. Jane H. Sharpe
Mrs. Helen Shine
Caroline A. Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Bryan S. Smith
Nancy R. Stallings
Ms. Katie M. Swanson
Annette Walker
Mr. and Mrs. Tabari Wallace
Amy and David Wang
Waters Contracting Company
Mr. Terry Alan Wethington and
Mrs. Julia I. Wethington
Charlotte Whitford
Judge and Mrs. J. W. Willey, Jr.
Colleen M. Wincentsen

Invest in the future of education and empower future generations. By including the Craven CC Foundation in your estate plans, you can make a meaningful impact on deserving students. We'll work with you to maximize your gift, whether it's cash, securities, or other assets. Contact the Craven CC Foundation to discuss planned giving today.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Craven CC Students Excel at SkillsUSA State Conference

In April, students in Craven CC's Career & Technical Programs brought home an impressive 39 medals from the SkillsUSA North Carolina State Leadership and Skills Conference, held in Greensboro. This remarkable performance highlighted the talent, dedication, and hard work of Craven CC students and instructors across a wide variety of technical disciplines.

Five Craven CC students achieved first-place finishes and earned the honor of representing the College at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in June in Atlanta. Notably, Storm Ducharme, a CNC student, secured third place nationally in CNC Programmer - Post-Secondary.

Other first-place qualifiers at the national conference included AJ White (CNC 2 Axis), Dylan Hoffman (Related Technical Math), Paul Quiram (Technical

Drafting), and Robert Gould (CNC 2 Axis High School Division). Shaun Carter (Barbering Concepts) and Diamond Carr (Early Childhood) also competed.

Additional programs that were represented and received medals included CNC Milling, Computer Programming, Crime Scene Investigation, Technical Computer Applications, IT Services, Cybersecurity, Barbering, Early Childhood Education, Welding Sculpture, Internetworking, Welding Fabrication, and Automotive.

"This incredible showing is a testament to the strength of our technical programs and the commitment of our students," said Matthew Berg, Craven CC Dean of Career & Technical Programs. "We're so proud of each competitor, and their success truly reflects the high-quality education and dedicated mentorship they receive here at Craven Community College."



Above: CNC student Storm Ducharme and CNC instructor Alex Block celebrate Ducharme's third-place national award.

Top left: Craven students and employees attend the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Atlanta. **Front row L-R:** CNC student AJ White, CNC student Dylan Hoffman, Early Childhood instructor Maria Eid, Early Childhood student Diamond Carr. **Second row:** CNC student Storm Ducharme, CAD student Paul Quiram, Associate Dean of Career & Technical Programs Traci O'Connor, Barbering Concepts student Shaun Carter. **Third row:** Dean of Career & Technical Programs Matthew Berg, Automotive instructor Walter Hurst. **Back row:** CAD instructor Jeff Brown, Havelock Campus Dean Ricky Meadows, CNC student Robert Gould, CNC instructor Alex Block.

Bottom left: Craven faculty, staff, and students eagerly await the North Carolina SkillsUSA Conference in Greensboro.

From Rejection to Recognition: Craven Student Takes a C-STEP Toward Success

For many high school seniors, the coveted college acceptance letter marks the pinnacle of their primary and secondary education. This was certainly the case for Tyler Zobel, a determined student who poured countless hours into academic success and crafting an impeccable resume. Despite his best efforts, he faced the disheartening reality of rejection from every university application, including UNC-Chapel Hill.

Unsure of his next steps, Zobel, then a student at Havelock High School, sought guidance from his school counselor and was introduced to the Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program (C-STEP). C-STEP is a partnership between Craven CC and UNC-Chapel Hill designed for high-achieving students who aim to transfer to UNC-Chapel Hill as juniors after completing their associate in arts or science degree. The program provides advising, mentoring, and support, along with opportunities for group activities and visits to the university.

Zobel decided to explore this opportunity and was accepted. "I was dumbfounded, especially since I was already rejected from UNC-Chapel Hill earlier that year," Zobel explained. "I immediately accepted their offer."

Beyond the guided academic experience, C-STEP provided him with a crucial sense of belonging. Having previously focused on building an impressive list of achievements, he discovered genuine connections with peers, instructors, and the wider community. Zobel acknowledges the stigma often associated with attending a community college before a four-year university, but he urges others to consider it. He notes that attending Craven has saved him over \$100,000 in tuition and fees while providing unique friendships, experiences, and a broader worldview.

Reflecting on his time at Craven CC, Zobel emphasizes the lasting impact of the people he connected with.

"I've found that spending time with veterans and other nontraditional students has significantly changed how I view the world," he shared. "I had spent so much time around people my age that I didn't even begin to think how much more there was. Knowing these people has changed my perspective on the world indefinitely."

Zobel graduated with his associate in science degree with honors during Craven's 58th annual commencement on May 16. He is pursuing an associate in arts degree over the summer before starting his undergraduate journey in mathematics at UNC-Chapel Hill this fall. His long-term aspirations include studying abstract algebra for graduate school in physics or computer science, ultimately aiming to

be a researcher in quantum computing or artificial intelligence, as well as law and politics. He even hopes to one day earn his juris doctorate and run for public office.

In April, Zobel was selected as the recipient of the North Carolina Community Colleges System 2025 Academic Excellence Award. This is the highest academic honor bestowed upon students within the state's community college system, recognizing outstanding academic achievements, leadership, and community service. Each of the 58 community colleges selects one student annually for this prestigious award.

Regardless of where his academic journey takes him, Zobel appreciates the struggle that led him to this point. His experience offers a prime example of the transformative power of community and the unexpected paths that can lead to success.

"Sometimes you feel like the world around you stopped because you aren't where you want to be," Zobel said. "It never did; you are just preparing for when you get there."



Tyler Zobel receives the NC Community Colleges System 2025 Academic Excellence Award.

student spotlight

HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESS

Celebrating Craven's Emerging Artists

Craven CC's talented visual arts students recently shined at the April ArtWalk, held at the Craven Arts Council inside the Bank of the Arts. These emerging artists proudly displayed an inspiring collection of their works across various mediums, demonstrating their passion, talent, and creativity. The event provided an invaluable opportunity for students to gain public exposure, showcase their skills, and offer their unique pieces for sale.

Each year, selected works of art become permanent pieces in the President's Art Collection. The 2025 Presidential Art Award was presented to student Lillian Carroll for her charcoal artwork titled "Earl Grey." This annual award celebrates the potential of emerging artists enrolled in the College's Associate in Fine Arts - Visual Arts degree program. Pieces from the collection are displayed in various locations across the College's campuses.



This charcoal artwork titled "Earl Grey" was created by student Lillian Carroll and received the 2025 Presidential Art Award.



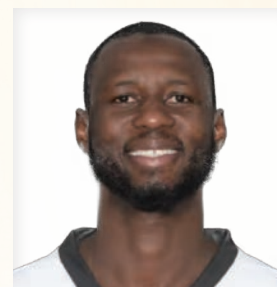
Craven visual arts students present their work at ArtWalk in April.

Former Craven Student Competes in 2024 Paris Olympics

Former Craven CC English as a Second Language (ESL) student Abdoul Issoufou competed in the 2024 Paris Olympics last August. The world taekwondo champion and three-time Olympian is a native of Niger, West Africa.

Issoufou became the first Nigerien athlete to win a silver medal in any sport at the Olympic Games when he placed second in the +80kg weight category in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. It was also the first medal that an athlete representing Niger had won in taekwondo at an Olympic Games.

He also received gold during the 2017 World Taekwondo Championship in Muju-gun, South Korea. Issoufou had the honor of carrying the Niger flag for the 2016, 2020, and 2024 Olympics opening ceremony, and he aspires to win Niger's first Olympic gold medal.



(Continued from page 21) ►

By 1968, the Craven County Technical Institute became an independent institution, with a Board of Trustees and a bold mission. They chose a 100-acre tract on Racetrack Road for the new campus, breaking ground the following year in a rain-soaked parking lot that would later become the front of Building B.

The years that followed brought growth, change, and progress. The College adopted the name Craven Community College in 1973 and began offering its own transfer programs. Students like David McFadyen and Tyler Harris—members of the first transfer cohort—went on to shape Craven County as public servants and community leaders.

Today, Craven Community College has expanded far beyond its humble beginnings. With thriving campuses in New Bern and Havelock, a state-of-the-art Volt Center,

and a forthcoming Public Safety Training Center, the College continues to adapt to meet the needs of the region it serves. From university partnerships to workforce development, Craven's programs reflect six decades of innovation, resilience, and heart.

The anniversary theme of "Deep Roots, Strong Futures" couldn't be more appropriate. Craven's story is one of people—visionaries, educators, students, and citizens—who believed in the power of accessible education. It's a legacy rooted in service and growing stronger every day.

As we close the book on this celebratory year, we honor the desk where it all began, the community that carried the vision forward, and the generations of students who will continue to write Craven's story for the next 60 years and beyond. 🌱



Community members seek information on various programs during the College's 60th Anniversary Open House on July 1.



Craven CC President Dr. Ray Staats locks the 60th anniversary time capsule, to be reopened July 1, 2035.

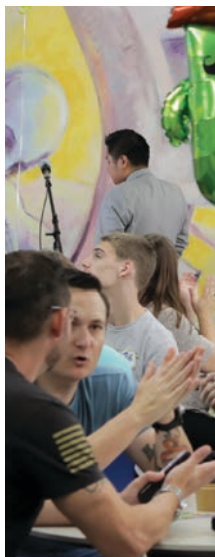


CAMPUS & COMMUNITY

Our tight-knit group of students and employees made the 60th anniversary a year to remember with community involvement and campus events. Follow us on social media to see more!



- 1) Fifth graders learn about a variety of career options during "Careers on Wheels."
- 2) Students take a break from classes for some fun and games during PantherFest.
- 3) Students take to the dance floor during the 60th Anniversary Founders' Day Ball.
- 4) Hurst Student Ambassadors participate in an Earth Day cleanup event at Lawson Creek Park.
- 5) Students place flags in the ground during a 9/11 tribute on the Havelock campus.
- 6) Dr. Dawn Baldwin Gibson speaks during the Black History Month event, "Deep Roots and Strong Futures: Honoring the Legacy of African Americans Who Shaped History."
- 7) Campers test out bottle rockets during STEAM camp on the New Bern campus.
- 8) The College's Encore! singing group performs during the Havelock campus tree-lighting event.
- 9) Students enjoy music, food, and festivities during the Hispanic Heritage event.





CONGRATS, GRADUATES!





CRAVEN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

800 College Court
New Bern, NC 28562
252-638-7200

Nonprofit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Permit # 205
New Bern, NC

[Recipient Name]
[Address]
[City], [State] [ZIP]

LIFETIME LEARNING CENTER

BROADWAY SHOWS
COMMUNITY EVENTS
INTERNATIONAL FILM SERIES
REGIONAL & GLOBAL TRAVEL

GO FOR ADVENTURES
NEAR AND FAR

CravenCC.edu/LLC

COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

ARTS & CRAFTS
KITCHEN & CUISINE
LANGUAGE
RECREATION & WELLNESS

TAKE UP A NEW,
EXCITING HOBBY

CravenCC.edu/CEP