Athletes and Special Friends Honored at 2013 RCC Athletic Hall of Fame

In October, nearly 200 people gathered at the Mission Inn to recognize this year’s inductees into the RCC Athletic Hall of Fame. 2013 honorees included an Olympic gold medalist, an All-American water polo player, a record-setting coach, and a special group of former athletes and friends who also set records for support of community college athletics.

The RCC Tiger Backers were established in 1980 to engage the community in athletics through tailgates, fundraisers and other events. At the group’s first meeting, founding President Gay Hood noted that “the College is one of the few things the entire community can be proud of.” That same Tiger pride is felt today under the leadership of current Tiger Backers President and RCC Alumnus Scott Hooks. Over the past 33 years, the Tiger Backers, whose founders were recipients of this year’s Bengal Award, has raised more than $1 million for RCC Athletics.

Ken Nickerson was a force as an RCC Tiger on the football field in the early 1940’s, and he credits much of his success in his life to his RCC education. This year’s Contributor recipient, Ken was recognized for his more than 50 years of continued annual support for athletics.

The President’s Award was presented to the owners of a family business who combined their professional skills with a love of athletics. For the past 10 years, George and Mary Linda Daddona (Claro’s Markets) have prepared and sold delicious homemade pasta at home softball and football games, donating their proceeds back to the teams.

Male Athlete inductee Noureddine Morceli is an Olympic gold medalist who dominated middle distance running around the globe for ten years. While at RCC, he was a six-time state champion, winning back-to-back titles in cross country and the 1500 and 5000 meters, and his community college national records still hold. At age 26, running for his native Algeria, he earned gold in the 1500 meters at the Atlanta Summer Olympic Games.

Melissa de Jonckheere was a stand out in water polo and swimming while at RCC, earning All-American honors and finishing her freshman year as MVP of the state champion water polo team. Our Female Athlete inductee’s success continued at San Diego State where she played in every match and was team captain. Melissa now works as an animal trainer at Sea World San Diego.

Coach inductee Bob Schermerhorn enjoyed a 40-plus year career as an educator and coach, 10 years of which were at RCC where he served as men’s basketball head coach and later as athletic director. He finished his Tiger career with a record of 225-98, earning four trips to the Final Four, nine bowl appearances, and three conference championships. He was twice honored as conference coach of the year and once as state coach of the year.

Class of 2013 recipients (from left) include: Noureddine Morceli, Melissa de Jonckheere, Bob Schermerhorn, and George and Mary Linda Daddona.

(From left) RCC Athletic Director Derrick Johnson congratulates Sue Rawlings, Nick Tavaglione and Jo Hord, representing the founding Tiger Backers. Also pictured are current Tiger Backers President Scott Hooks and Emcee Nick Goldware.

RCC Tiger Pride was evident even in the dessert centerpieces!

Bob Schermerhorn received a commemorative piece of the original Wheelock floor. Bob is pictured with his assistant coaches (from left) Brian Neal and Bob Russo.

Thank you to 2013 RCC Athletic Hall of Fame Sponsors

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President’s Message

Recently, Dr. Cynthia Azari, RCCD’s Interim Chancellor, sent a letter encouraging current supporters and community members to join her in supporting RCCD students by making a year-end gift to the RCCD Foundation. I appreciate her words of encouragement, and hope that you will consider making a gift either on line at www.rccd.edu/foundation or by using the enclosed envelope.

In her letter, Dr. Azari says that for her, education equaled opportunity. This was also the case for me. I came to the United States from Cuba as a young boy, escaping political unrest. Fortunately, my family eventually settled in Riverside. I attended local schools, graduating from Poly High School, after which I spent my first two years of college at Riverside City College. My classes were small, my professors were outstanding, and I had a very positive experience that set me on the right path to successfully transfer to Cal Poly Pomona and to enjoy a successful career with Merrill Lynch. I am forever grateful to RCC and honored to give back by serving as an RCCD Foundation Board member.

I also am humbled to see how grateful our scholarship recipients are, and to know what a difference a scholarship makes – not only financially, but also to a student’s sense of self-worth. And I am proud that the RCCD Foundation provides college funding in addition to scholarship support, including programmatic support for athletics, performing arts, STEM education, and other areas; student enrichment opportunities; and equipment purchases. All of these areas benefit from the generosity of friends like you. The needs are as diverse as our student body, and any gift that you can make is appreciated.

Thank you. My best wishes for a happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Raul A. Aballi
President

Recent Happenings

In October, RCCD Foundation Board member Ray Hicks, region manager for Southern California Edison, was among the special guests at the reopening of the RCC STEM Center. SCE currently provides $50,000 in scholarship support for RCCD STEM students.

Thanks to the RCC Tiger Backers for sponsoring tailgates at each of RCC’s home football games!

In October, RCC opened a community garden adjacent to the Math and Science Building. A fund has been established at the RCCD Foundation to support the garden, which is sponsored in part by Calvary Presbyterian Church, the Wood Streets Green Team, and Western Municipal Water District.

This year, the RCC Associates are celebrating 30 years of support for reentry students. In October, Founding Chair Evie Guin, still an active member, was presented with a pearl bracelet in recognition of her continuing commitment and support.

In November, Moreno Valley College President Sandra Mayo gave the Community Partners a tour of the Student Academic Services Building, opening in spring 2014.

On October 29, the Norco College Art Gallery opened “A Visible Mark: Contemporary Drawings.” The Gallery is open Monday through Friday from noon-5 pm, and the exhibit runs through December 5.

Also in October, RCC’s Film and Television department hosted its first horror film festival, featuring special guest Ron Chaney. Proceeds from the event will provide student scholarships.

RCC Career Tech students captured five medals at the National SkillsUSA Leadership Conference, culminating a year in which 20 RCC students earned 31 medals. Jovie Camarce (Graphic Communications) and Nathan Ribelin (Advertising Design) took gold medal honors, while Sandra Mejia and Greg McKee earned silver medals in TV Production, and Jeff Fusterer captured a bronze medal in Photography and “best of show” honors for one of his pieces. Support for the team was provided by a Perkins Grant, the Associated Students of RCC, private and industry sponsors, and the RCCD Foundation.
GRANTS AND GIFTS PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT

In September, friends, family and colleagues gathered to remember Professor Emeritus Cecil Green as RCC Quad Room 128 was dedicated in his memory, thanks to a generous gift provided by his widow, RCCD Trustee Janet Green. Professor Emeritus Green served RCC as a faculty member and administrator for more than 30 years.

In October, the RCCD Foundation received a three-year pledge of $45,000 in scholarship support from Cardenas Markets. RCCD Foundation Board Member Jaime Hurtado was among the guests when the scholarship was announced at the annual “Festival Cardenas,” held at the Auto Club Speedway in Ontario.

In our last newsletter we announced the establishment of the Mary Florence Gleeson Memorial Endowed Nursing Scholarship, established by RCC Alumnus Gene Gleeson and his wife Traute, named in honor of Gene’s mother. We are pleased to announce that Gene and Traute have established an additional scholarship, the Willard Lafayette Gleeson Memorial Endowed Scholarship, in honor of Gene’s father, Willard, who enjoyed a successful career in public relations, and then as a general manager and later as an owner of local radio stations. This scholarship supports students pursuing careers in broadcasting or journalism.

In October, Comerica Bank awarded a grant of $12,000 to the RCCD Foundation to support the District-affiliated Tri Tech Small Business Development Center. This grant will enable Tri Tech to offer training workshops and consultation services for small businesses throughout the region, and outreach to low to moderate income and underserved businesses.

Date Set for Groundbreaking of RCCD Centennial Plaza

Please mark your calendars and save the date
March 13, 2014
Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendars

Friday, December 6
Emeriti Faculty Holiday Luncheon
RCC Quad Art Gallery

Friday, December 6
RCC Tiger Backers Membership Reception
RCCD Alumni House

Beyond the Dream:
Celebrating the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Friday, January 17
MLK Student Essay Awards Breakfast
Moreno Valley College

Monday, January 27
RCC Associates Luncheon
RCC Hall of Fame

Monday, April 14
RCC Tiger Backers Golf Tournament
Victoria Club

Thursday, April 24
RCCD Annual Recognition Awards and Arts Gala
Riverside Municipal Auditorium