

A Collection of Good Works by the Pensacola Junior College Foundation

# COMPENDIUM

Spring 2009



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## PJC FOUNDATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



GROVER ROBINSON, IV  
PJC Foundation President

As I attended the recent PJC commencement ceremony and watched students proudly receive their degrees, I was reminded of the significant impact PJC has on our community. That impact was no doubt realized by many of our graduates as that degree helped them obtain employment in this difficult economic time.

Still, whether their next step leads directly into a career or a university, PJC graduates are prepared to compete with the best. The high value of community college education is particularly evident as our state universities are capping enrollment and many in our workforce are returning to the classrooms for additional training due to layoffs.

Below are facts related to recent studies demonstrating the tremendous impact of community colleges throughout the state.

Two out of three Florida nurses are graduates of community colleges.

Three out of four Florida first-responders are graduates of community colleges.

Four out of five African-American and Hispanic students in Florida began at community colleges.

Five out of 10 students in our state universities began at community colleges.

Six out of 10 teaching degrees in Florida are earned by students who transferred from community colleges.

These impressive figures are not surprising to the thousands of PJC alumni who are enjoying successful careers. If you are one of those PJC alumni, or if you appreciate the services you get from our alumni, I hope you will consider a gift to PJC Foundation to help the college continue offering the top quality education that has been a trademark for the past 60 years.

With unprecedented state budget cuts already in effect, it is especially important for all of us to support PJC. We need you to give as generously as possible to ensure that students, faculty, and programs flourish for generations to come, and that Northwest Florida will continue to flourish as a community providing the best quality of life for its citizens. PJC is integral to our success and its impact is felt directly in our local economy.

Thank you for your past support of this institution, and more importantly, your continued commitment to making our community a better place.

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On the Cover: PJC alum and long-time supporter Mike Wiggins shares a glimpse into the Pensacola Mayor's office along with some PJC memories.

Photo courtesy of Barrett McClean Photography.

Inset photo courtesy of Pensacola News Journal by Katie King.

## COMPENDIUM

The award-winning Compendium is published for alumni and friends of Pensacola Junior College.

### NEED INFORMATION? PLEASE CALL!

PJC's College Development & Alumni Affairs and Foundation staff are here to assist you. You may reach us at (850) 484-1560.

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*The PJC Foundation promotes the annual giving program of the college and solicits funds for various projects which the college cannot otherwise fund. In addition, donations are sought for scholarships and other worthwhile projects which assist Pensacola Junior College and its students.*

*As a tax-assisted institution, Pensacola Junior College cannot meet all needs with state and student support. The PJC Foundation assists in obtaining private support to supplement college budgets. The PJC Foundation is a 501(c)3 tax deductible non-profit corporation and a direct support organization chartered by the state of Florida to provide private support to the college.*



# Befriending PJC

Old and new friends of PJC mingled with students at a Circle of Friends luncheon at the Pensacola Yacht Club in April.

PJC music student Will Paxton performed



*“The gift of an education lives forever, reaching into the future and touching generations. When we invest in education, we’re building futures and creating a better tomorrow.”*

— Circle of Friends Emcee John Hutchinson

Celeste Whisenant and student Ellie Gomez



## SPONSORS EXTRAORDINAIRE

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Ed and Kitty Meadows with emcee John Hutchinson



Mike and Mary Ellen Wiggins with Jan Miller

*“Every year there are at least 1,500 qualified students who are unable to attend PJC because of a lack of funding. Undoubtedly, there are hundreds more who never pursue an education because they cannot imagine how they will ever afford it. Together, we can provide the way to transform the lives of these countless ‘would-be’ students.”*



John Bruce, George Bailey and Ed Neff



Charles Gray and Phi Theta Kappa honors student Alessandro Bailetti



Accounting student Leanne Diehl with PJC supporter Jean Calvert



Patrice Whitten with Trace Brown, who led the invocation and whose son attends PJC



Circle of Friends photographer Amy Harrod is a 2008 PJC grad and Anna Lamar Switzer scholarship winner

— PJC President Ed Meadows

## Scholarship Spotlights Outstanding Freshmen Musicians

More than two decades after his untimely death in 1986, Ike Terry's passion for music and education continues to inspire music students through the Cantonment Rotary Club Ike Terry Music Endowed Scholarship earmarked for the outstanding freshman vocalist and the outstanding freshman instrumentalist at PJC.

Rotarians Jack O'Donnell and Ed Boywid fondly remember Terry who was vice president of the Cantonment Rotary Club at the time of his death.

"Ike Terry was a man of many talents," O'Donnell recalls. "He was the organist at Pensacola's First United Methodist Church, a music teacher in the public schools, school board member, catfish farmer, athlete, community leader and devoted family man."

When Terry died of a heart attack while playing basketball at the Wright Place, the activities center for First United Methodist, his fellow Rotarians chose to honor him by setting up a scholarship for music students, Boywid relates.

The first scholarship was awarded in 1991 and a few years later, they began awarding two scholarships each year for PJC music students.

In recent years, the Cantonment Rotary Club has turned the scholarship management over to the PJC Foundation so the scholarship can benefit from state matching funds. This has doubled the scholarship awards to \$1,000 each, according to O'Donnell.

Each April, the Cantonment Rotary Club presents the Ike Terry Music Scholarship, along with five other scholarships to PJC students, at a luncheon at the Wright Place. Other scholarships go to students in culinary, legal assisting, automotive and vocational programs at PJC.

"After lunch, the two music scholarship winners always perform for everyone in the Ike Terry Rehearsal Hall at the church," O'Donnell says. "Giving these scholarships is a highlight of the Rotary year."

*"I wish every contributor to the Ike Terry Music Scholarship could see the wonderful looks on the faces of the students when I tell them that they have been selected for this award."*

— Don Snowden, PJC Music and Theatre department head

Winners of the 2009 Ike Terry Music Scholarships are Jeramiah Snell, outstanding freshman guitarist, and Dyllon Burnside, outstanding freshman vocalist.

Both students pointed out the importance of the financial aid that comes with this scholarship recognition.

Snell, a Dean's List student, was a carpenter for 15 years and enrolled at PJC after surviving cancer. He says his wife and three young children are very supportive and are making sacrifices so that he can get a college degree.

"I feel absolutely honored to win the Ike Terry Scholarship," Snell says. "This scholarship will allow me to stay at PJC and pursue my dream to be a music teacher.

"With a family, it is a struggle to be in college, but the music program at PJC is worth it!"



Dyllon Burnside



Jeramiah Snell

Burnside, also a Dean's List student and member of Phi Theta Kappa honor society, says education is a top priority. Since his senior year in high school, Burnside has toured with the music group 3D, that performs at local high schools encouraging students to stay in school and graduate.

"I really appreciate the Ike Terry Scholarship," Burnside says. "My mom is a single parent and this scholarship will help a lot with the rising cost of college, especially those unexpected expenses that seem to pop up during the school year."

# Breaking a Cycle

“The greatest risk is the risk of riskless living,” according to author and motivational speaker Stephen Covey.

PJC First Generation scholars are taking a risk that none of their ancestors successfully undertook. They are pursuing college and if they graduate, they will be the first in their families to accomplish this monumental feat.

Thanks to the First Generation Scholarship, established in 2006, these students will have at least one obstacle removed from their quest – the question of how to pay for college.

Donors to this scholarship realize a wise investment when they see one. Their money matches state dollars, doubling their investment in our community.

And, they know that education results in long-term earning potential that flows right back into community coffers. Rather than deplete Pensacola-area resources, these First Generation scholars will contribute to them.

Over a 30-year career, these college graduates will earn at least \$180,000 more than non-degree holders. Their children will grow up stronger and better equipped than the generation before them. A cycle will be broken.

## Lighting the Way Susan Story

“Helping students break through barriers to achieve educational excellence is important to Gulf Power Company. The First Generation scholarships are important because they can help start new traditions of higher learning for families for years to come. Once the light of education is turned on, it serves as a strong beacon for others to pursue.”



SUSAN STORY  
Gulf Power Co.

## Supporting Health Care Charles Brewer

“Health First Network is an integrated, comprehensive network of physicians dedicated to improving the health care experience and quality of life of people in our community. The physicians within our organization felt strongly that supporting nursing education through this scholarship was a positive and proactive way to contribute to our community.”



CHARLES BREWER  
Health First Network



Debutante Cotillion Board (from left) Betsy Daniels, Norma Croke, Tessie Williams, Judy Prim, Sally Coe, Debbie Caldwell, Jane Renfroe, Eleanor Ziemann, Pat Leidner, Mary Catherine Hinton, Mary Anderson, and Betty Robinson

## Opening Doors Debbie Caldwell

“The Society of the Debutante Charity Cotillion supports the First Generation Scholarship because of the positive impact having an education will make on the recipients as well as their families, future generations and the community at large. Many who live in Northwest Florida are below the poverty line. Providing educational opportunities for this target group will help to break the cycle of poverty and provide for a brighter future.”

## Impacting Students and Families Gene Rosenbaum

“The First Generation Scholarship program is particularly rewarding to us because the recipient does not know the donor, and as a contributor, we do not know the individual student that received the scholarship. Our satisfaction is being aware that by providing this opportunity, we have made a positive impact on both the student and their family for the rest of their lives.”



GENE ROSENBAUM  
Southern Scrap Co.

## Winning Big in Life Donna M. Bloomer

“Getting a chance at education beyond high school is like getting a chance to play a lottery game where you pick one of only two numbers. The chances are really good and almost certain that with some application and effort you can win big. The opportunity to try can be everything.”



DONNA M. BLOOMER  
Bloomer, Geri and Co.

### FIRST GENERATION DONORS ... CHANGING A COMMUNITY

Baroco Electric Construction Co.  
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Gulf Power Foundation, Inc.  
Health First Network  
Society of the Debutante Charity Cotillion

Southern Scrap Co.  
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## Gift of Gold

Nashville legend and PJC alum Larry Butler is donating about 80 gold and platinum albums from his collection to PJC.

"They are the ones I've done through the years with Kenny Rogers, B.J. Thomas and others," says Butler, whose music producing career spans more than three decades and includes a 1979 Grammy Award for Producer of the Year.

"When our students see Mr. Butler's gold and platinum records, they will realize the possibilities they have at PJC," said Don Snowden, Music and Theatre department head.

After studying music at PJC, Butler launched his Nashville career as a pianist, but soon found himself producing music. Before long, he linked up with Kenny Rogers.

"I'm the one who convinced him (Kenny Rogers) to go into country music," says Butler who fell in love with the breadth and musicianship needed to successfully produce albums. The process involves choosing the music, negotiating with the artist, securing a studio and hiring musicians.

"I'm back in the saddle," says Butler who is again traveling to Nashville from his home in Pensacola. "My first love is music."

Larry Butler with his gold and platinum album collection



## Honoring Philanthropy

The Sansing Foundation was named Outstanding Philanthropic Organization at the local celebration of National Philanthropy Day in November.

Since 2003, Pensacola businessman Sandy Sansing and his wife Peggy have made a difference in the lives of more than 545 PJC students and are still going strong.

Sandy Sansing, a PJC alum, gives far more than a scholarship check. He gives time and involvement, making it a point to get to know as many of his scholarship

recipients as possible. He hopes to encourage them to persevere. And it works.

"A lot of students want to go to college, but because of funds, they're not able to go," said pre-engineering major Stephen Alexander. "Because of the Sansing scholarship, I don't have to work full time."

The Philanthropy Day celebration also included recognition for tireless PJC Foundation volunteer Karen Hendrix as the Foundation's Heart of Gold recipient.

Hendrix has worked with the Foundation's Holiday Grande fundraiser — in previous years by elevating auction income and in 2008 by spearheading sponsorships. Hendrix also works on the Foundation Board of Governors and Guild.



Peggy and Sandy Sansing and Karen Hendrix were recognized for their stellar philanthropy



Sansing Scholar Stephen Alexander

## Multicultural Achievement

PJC supporter and Gulf Power executive John Hutchinson sponsored the Multicultural Awards program April 9 with a \$1,500 donation. The program honors high school seniors throughout Escambia and Santa Rosa counties who hold a 3.0 GPA. Some of the honorees received scholarships to attend PJC's summer session.

## Switzer Distinguished Artist

Internationally renowned painter and printmaker Tom Nakashima was selected as the 2009 Switzer Distinguished Artist.

Besides displaying his works at the Anna Lamar Switzer Center, Nakashima interacted with students in their drawing, painting and photography classes, conducted a gallery tour of his works and gave free public lectures. Art-lovers enjoyed meeting him at a reception in his honor.

The Switzer Distinguished Artist Series is presented annually through a major gift from the Switzer and Reilly families.



CELEBRATIONS



Nan McKee



Alessandro Bailetti



Kenyetta Gill



Jalin Thomas

Celebrating Student Success

Support for PJC students and programs has far reaching results. Following are just a few success stories.

Gianni Rodriquez and Travis Cummings, Hobbs Center Adult High School students, earned perfect scores of 3008 on the reading section of the mandatory Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. This is the second year in a row that Adult High students have earned a perfect score on the FCAT reading test.

Nan McKee was selected as a 2009 Coca-Cola Silver Scholar based on her scores earned in the All-USA Academic Team competition. McKee and Alessandro Bailetti made the 2009 Phi Theta Kappa All-Florida Academic Team.

The Corsair student newspaper captured the General Excellence Award for Florida community college papers for the 15th time in the last 18 years.

Radiography students earned a 100 percent pass rate on the national certification examination — on their first attempt — for the 13th straight year.

PJC's Practical Nursing program was ranked No. 1 out of 1,036 programs in the nation in 2008.

PJC Lady Pirate Kenyetta Gill was honored as NJCAA National Player of the Week for Dec. 7-13.

Jalin Thomas received the 2009 Hal Chasey Scholar Athlete Award that goes to only one Florida community college basketball player each year.



Hobbs Center Adult High School



Right, Radiography students



Far right, Nursing students in the SIM center

PJC Board Chair John O'Connor (right) presents Douglas Worley with a proclamation at the April ceremony

Photo courtesy of Pensacola News Journal, by Gary McCracken



Worley Boulevard Dedication

PJC family, friends and dignitaries gathered on the Milton campus to celebrate the naming of Worley Boulevard in honor of Douglas Worley. A 1956 PJC alum, Worley joined the PJC staff in 1966 and was the founding provost of the Milton campus when it opened in 1985. He helped initiate new programs in forestry, environmental science, agriculture and horticulture before retiring in 1995.

## UNSUNG HERO



**PAT CREWS**  
Staff Assistant to the President

Keeping track of the man who ultimately is responsible for the operations of a multicampus college is no easy task.

But Pat Crews, staff assistant to the president since 2000, sure makes it appear that way.

She oversees the commander-in-chief's schedule with grace and manages to exude friendliness and ease that represent PJC beautifully.

Besides putting in regular work hours, Crews often volunteers at after-hours PJC Foundation events.

For instance, after buying a ticket to attend the annual Foundation fundraiser Holiday Grande, Crews still pitched in with a welcoming smile and assisted guests as they arrived at the December event.

"I am very pleased to volunteer my help to the Foundation staff at various events. It is one way in which I can show my support," says Crews.

## THANK YOU, SPONSORS

Aloha Wine World, AT&T, Bank of America, Baptist Healthcare, Inc., BB&T, Bell Steel Company, Brian & Crystal Spencer, Bud Light, Doc & Billie Bailey, Coastal Bank & Trust (formerly Bank of Pensacola), Emerald Coast Smiles by Design, FormSystems, Gulf Coast Community Bank, Gulf Power, Keegan Staffing/Keith & Linn Farrior, Mansfield Industrial, Margie Moore/Merrill Lynch, New Leaders in Fertility & Endocrinology, North Hill Chair Covers & Linens, Pat Odom/Merrill Lynch, Patti Taylor, Peg & Eric Nickelsen, Pen Air Federal Credit Union, Robb Taylor, Vertec, Inc., Will & Jane Merrill.



Event sponsors Brian and Crystal Spencer (L) were the lucky winners of a hunting excursion donated by Ed and Kitty Meadows



Donors John and Quinlyn Bray (L) with Annual Fund Chair George Bailey and his wife Annette



Auction donors Steve and Janet Burch (L), Bo and Judy Johnson



Auction donors Cheryl Hall (L) and her twin Sharon Wrynn (R) with Kay Packwood



Newlyweds Patricia and Henry Odom celebrate the season

## Celebrating for a Good Cause

Thanks to the efforts of diligent volunteers, nearly \$60,000 (and a lot of fun) was raised to benefit students at the PJC Foundation's annual Holiday Grande Gala, Dec. 8, at the Pensacola Yacht Club.

*"None of this would be possible without a strong, committed core group of volunteers. Thanks so much to our Foundation board, guild members, our committee chairs and all who served on the various committees that make this a special night. And thanks to each of you for all that you do as our advocates and friends and especially for being here tonight in support of our great college."*

— PJC Foundation President  
Grover Robinson

*"Know that your presence and participation have a tremendous impact that is needed now more than ever. Given the economic situation and job losses, many current and future students are depending on our help to attend college, which is what our Foundation is all about: changing lives through education."*

— PJC Foundation Executive  
Director Patrice Whitten



*“What an incredible group of friends we have in this community. PJC is truly beloved by our community and the outreaching support is inspiring.... Without you and your support we cannot make the educational dreams of our students a reality.”*

— PJC President Ed Meadows

Donors Dee Green and Jim Einhart ignited a bidding war with their Italian-inspired dinner for six



Ron and Jan Miller



Noelle Jeanminette and John Tedder were among the PJC Student Ambassadors who helped make the gala a dazzling success



Gay and Bo Carter check out the treasures



Sharon Rosenbaum with her winnings

## VOLUNTEER CORNER



**SHARON WRYNN**

I grew up in Pensacola and attended PJC before graduating from Mississippi College. After marrying and living away from my hometown for 35 years, John and I moved back here six years ago.

PJC and education have always been vital parts of my life. I became involved with the Holiday Grande Gala four years ago because my friend Karen Hendrix was chairing the event.

The Foundation has a wonderful outreach making a difference for students interested in furthering their education. The Foundation has a staff of dedicated employees and they have made it easy for me to feel that I can assist them in making a difference and thus affecting the community.



Rob and Rena Patton, Rhonda Gonzales, Beverly Pica, Robb Taylor, Karen Hendrix, Ralph and Jan Peterson, Sue and Rock Penfold



Sponsors Karen and Ted Mansfield (L and R) with Rae Ann Coutu and her mother Rhonda Gonzales



Patrice Whitten, Fr. Jack Gray (donor of rosary beads blessed by the Pope), James Martin, Fran and Charlie Switzer

## YOU MADE IT HAPPEN!

Rena and Rob Patton, chairs

Rhonda and Hank Gonzales, co-chairs

Sue and Rock Penfold and Robb Taylor, auction co-chairs

Karen Hendrix and Beverly Pica, sponsorship co-chairs

Volunteers:

Mary Adams, Laura Austin, Quinlyn Bray, Jean Calvert, Maria Christopher, Cheryl Kees Clendenon, Norma Crooke, Connie Crosby, Kat Davis, Jerry Dickerson, Rita Finkbone, Chris Gilmore, Dee Green, Diane Gup, Jerold Hall, Suzanne Hamel, Cookie Kichler, Jane Litvak, Karen Mansfield, Jan Miller, Peg Nickelsen, Abbie Offerdahl, Kay Packwood, Jan Peterson, Pam Rainwater, Perrie Renfroe, Elba Robertson, Taris Savell, Marty Stanovich, Dona Usry, Ellen Vinson, Sharon Wrynn.



Nursing and Allied Health students benefit from new fund

Liz Greenhut



## Unique Fund Helps Students in Health Care

Rising costs in tuition, books and uniforms are not the only financial obstacles students face when they sign up for classes in the health care field.

PJC students in Nursing and Allied Health programs often must purchase expensive medical equipment necessary for class assignments, as well as pay for certification exams when they graduate.

The Liz Greenhut Student Assistance Fund is a unique new fund that specifically helps Nursing and Allied Health students with classroom supplies and exam fees, according to Foundation Executive Director Patrice Whitten.

Greenhut, a longtime Foundation donor, says she established the fund because of her confidence in PJC's health related programs.

"I believe in PJC! It is a college that needs to be here," Greenhut says.

"I wanted to provide support for the classrooms so that students in Nursing and Allied Health could learn better. Nursing and Allied Health programs will benefit us all."

Steve Bannow, director of Allied Health, points out that this new fund is especially helpful at a time when student financial need is particularly great.

"This new and very generous award covers expenses for class supplies and post-graduate testing which often are not included in other aid packages," Bannow says. "It also acknowledges the significance of supporting our extremely important health care programs."

"We are very grateful for the assistance that this timely and thoughtful fund will provide to deserving students in a variety of health care fields."

Patricia Jones, director of Nursing, adds that many students have great difficulty purchasing items like stethoscopes and penlights, and paying out-of-pocket expenses for testing.

"In addition to the licensure application fee to the Board of Nursing, students have to pay a separate fee to the testing company to take the NCLEX, the national licensing exam," Jones relates.

"In the past, the inability to pay has caused students to delay taking the exam, and statistically, the success rate on the NCLEX decreases as the delay in taking the exam increases. This gift will help some students be more successful on the exam and be able to enter the work force sooner."

Marcia Williams, provost of the Warrington campus, says this new fund will undergird PJC's mission of serving the community by serving its students.

"Generous gifts to the college, such as the Liz Greenhut Student Assistance Fund, help students as they continue their education in Nursing and Allied Health programs at PJC and become productive members of our community," Williams says.

"It is gifts like these that allow us to better serve our students and build the health science programs that are recognized locally and nationally."



# Making a Difference

Providing scholarships, endowed teaching chairs and cutting-edge technology are just a few ways the Foundation is making a difference for students and staff. Following are some of PJC's many Foundation Governors who work quietly behind the scenes, enhancing education, giving back to the world through their efforts at PJC.

## Improving Lives

JAN MILLER

ARCO Industries

Vice President of Administration and Human Resources



"Initially, I began supporting PJC because of a friend who had been an LPN and then went back to PJC to become a Registered Nurse. When she passed away, much too soon, some friends and I

endowed a PJC scholarship in her name.

"It's been gratifying to see women use this scholarship to improve their lives. Some of these women were recently divorced or just needed training for a career — whatever their backgrounds, PJC was there for them.

"At work, I've seen firsthand how PJC changes lives. We have two Vietnamese employees who came to PJC to better their English skills through the ESOL classes. We've also had several employees attend PJC to get everything from their GED to college classes.

"Over the years, PJC has helped so many people that I know. I've seen the positive impact the college has in their lives and that leads to a positive impact in the community.

"Because of this, I recently decided to make PJC a beneficiary of my estate that will eventually result in a \$1 million gift to the college.

"I'm glad to be able to do this, to help such a large institution that reaches so many different people and enables them to have better lives."

## Valuing Leadership

LUMON MAY

May's Construction  
Co-Owner



"As a native Pensacolian and a graduate of the Escambia County Public School System, I understand the value of quality education. Many jurisdictions across the country do not offer a

junior/community college opportunity. I was fortunate to live in a city that offered me and many of my colleagues the opportunity to start our collegiate careers in a junior college environment.

"As a student at PJC, I learned the importance of my academic career and the value of hard work. The staff at PJC supported the value of community service and community learning that I had received from my family.

"In addition to my academic success, I was given the opportunity to become a student leader. The leadership skills that I acquired at PJC set me on the course that I currently maintain.

"I am forever grateful for my experiences at PJC and look forward to continuing as a member of the PJC Foundation Board so that I can ensure that future students in our community have a rewarding and life changing experience at PJC."

## Staying On Track

RALPH W. EMERSON JR.

Plasmine Technology  
Co-founder, Board Chair



"From the first breakfast my wife Evon and I attended sponsored by the PJC Foundation, I have become more and more convinced that PJC is on the right track with the college's approach

to higher education in the Pensacola area. "I have been especially impressed with the PJC Foundation and its success in reaching out to community leaders, PJC graduates and Pensacola citizens. As a result, the college has received significant funding for a number of scholarship programs. These programs are giving many students, who otherwise would not have the opportunity, a chance to further their educations.

"The feeling of respect that the Pensacola community has toward PJC, and likewise, the respect the college shows toward our community comes from years of strong leadership by the administration, the faculty and the students — many of whom have gone on to be Pensacola leaders. PJC is making a difference."

## Fulfilling Goals

LUTIMOTHY MAY

University of West Florida  
Student Support Services Assistant Director  
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church Pastor



"In many instances, the difference between success and the lack thereof depends upon opportunities. I believe that Pensacola Junior College has become a major bridge of

opportunity that links students to favorable futures filled with success.

"Amid the present challenges that confront the average student, the 'PJC Experience' impresses upon aspiring students that they can dream and fulfill their goals from here (PJC)."

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*"It is every man's obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it."*

---

— Albert Einstein



# Looking on the Sunny Side

## ALUMNI PROFILE



MIKE WIGGINS

### EDUCATION:

Pensacola High School, 1963  
Pensacola Junior College, A.A. 1965  
Florida State University, B.S. 1967

### FAMILY:

Wife: Mary Ellen Wiggins  
Four grown children  
Nine grandchildren

### RECOGNITION:

Pensacola City Mayor  
Pensacola City Council  
Five Flags Rotary Club  
Paul Harris Fellow  
1988 Community Leader of the Year  
Award from Pensacola News  
Journal and Pensacola Area Chamber  
of Commerce  
PJC Foundation Board

### PJC EXPERIENCE:

Phi Sigma Tau Fraternity,  
Treasurer

“When I graduated from high school, there was no doubt about where I would begin college. PJC was the place to go. PJC gave me the start that I needed academically and socially. It prepared me to move on. I’m still proud of my ties to PJC.”



Above: Mike and Mary Ellen Wiggins

Right: Mike and Mary Ellen Wiggins with seven of their nine grandchildren



The large glass window in the mayor’s office at Pensacola City Hall gives a sparkling view of Pensacola Bay. With Mike Wiggins in the mayor’s chair, the view of Pensacola inside the office is just as sunny.

Flashing a smile that rivals the Gulf Coast’s sugar white sands, Wiggins readily admits that he is the city’s chief cheerleader. It’s a role the Pensacola native relishes.

“I take great pride in Pensacola. I loved growing up here,” Wiggins says. “I’m proud of how the area has become more cosmopolitan with a growing arts community. I have a deep-seated love for this area, its natural beauty, its opportunities and mostly, its people.”

Wiggins’ appreciation for Pensacola’s diverse population began during his boyhood days while helping his parents, Charlie and Ruth Wiggins, owners of Escambia Farmer’s Supply.

After graduating from PJC and Florida State University, Wiggins served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy and a few years later, returned to Pensacola to work in the family business.

“My dad never met a stranger; he enjoyed talking with everyone who came into our store,” Wiggins relates. “Status didn’t matter; everyone was the same to my dad. Everyone was important. I learned so much while working with him.”

Not surprisingly, one of the first things Wiggins did after his January installation as mayor was set up monthly coffee meetings so that he could talk to his constituents.



“It’s very informal. People come with lots of different issues to discuss, but everyone seems interested in fiscal responsibility,” Wiggins says.

Of course, taking the helm of Pensacola during the celebration of its 450th anniversary has entailed much more than chatting over coffee.

Barely a month into office, Wiggins was welcoming King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sophia of Spain to an event-packed tour of the city.

“Having the King and Queen of Spain visit to celebrate the 1559 settlement by Don Tristan de Luna validated to us that Pensacola really is the oldest city in the country,” Wiggins points out.



Mayor Wiggins and King Juan Carlos I of Spain at one of many events celebrating Pensacola's 450th anniversary

Photo courtesy of Celebrate Pensacola and KarnaCawthonPhotographer.com



Mike Wiggins, the second-ever elected mayor in Pensacola history, took office in January

Photo courtesy of Pensacola News Journal, by Katie King



Wiggins is a popular emcee at Foundation events

"During the events, I was so proud of Pensacola's citizens. They turned out in thousands, young and old, cheering and waving flags. The King and Queen were truly delighted with their reception here."

From entertaining Spanish royalty to honoring military heroes to visiting local elementary schools, Wiggins says he enjoys the entire spectrum of mayoral duties and doesn't mind the demanding schedule.

"I find these opportunities for serving to be extraordinarily satisfying," Wiggins says. "But I couldn't do this without the full support of my family. My wife Mary Ellen is really my rock."

Over the years, Wiggins' enthusiasm for Pensacola has included much more than an infectious smile and genial conversation. He has volunteered on numerous community boards and served almost 15 years in the City Council before gaining the distinction of being the second-ever elected mayor in Pensacola history.

Among the causes Wiggins has long championed is the PJC Foundation. Besides taking on a variety of board duties, Wiggins' affable charm has made him a popular master of ceremonies at Foundation events.

"I believe in the excellent work done through the PJC Foundation," Wiggins says.

*"PJC still has a dedicated faculty and enthusiastic students. It's a great place to start college!"*

—Mike Wiggins

"Because of the generosity of our donors, many students are attending PJC who otherwise couldn't.

"When I was a freshman in 1964, there was no Foundation at PJC," Wiggins recalls. "I've often wondered who in my high school class didn't get the chance to go to PJC because there were so few scholarships available back then."

Wiggins remembers that PJC was rated as one of the top junior colleges in the nation and had excellent teachers. He easily recalls their names and their influence.

English professor Hatton Burke and art professor Charles Giles instilled a lifelong appreciation of literature and art.

"To this day, I love good literature and when I go to museums, I can still identify the famous art on the walls," Wiggins says with a chuckle.

"From Dr. Owen Long, I gained a foundation in business that I've used ever since. And, of course, Margaret Berrisford was the dean who really was there for all of us. She took us right out of high school and shepherded us through PJC."

Caring professors were still a PJC hallmark several years later when Wiggins returned to campus — once for computer training and again for specific horticulture classes necessary for him to secure state licensing for his business.

In particular, botany professor William Bennett helped Wiggins map out the classes he needed over a couple of years so that the state requirements could be met.

"Dr. Bennett made botany interesting for me the first time I went to PJC, and then he really guided me through those horticulture classes so that I could get the certification," Wiggins recalls.

The world was much different in the mid-60s when Wiggins was a PJC student.

Pensacola's small-town ambience made it easy for him to hitch-hike to campus and hangout with friends in the student center after class.

Fraternities and sororities were popular and provided plenty of social activities. Formal dances with boys in Sunday suits, girls in long dresses and faculty chaperones lining the walls were an expected part of PJC student life.

While Wiggins is pleased that PJC has grown and changed with the times, he says some important things about PJC have not changed.

"PJC still has a dedicated faculty and enthusiastic students," Wiggins says. "It's a great place to start college!"

## MILESTONES

Congratulations to Foundation Governor **Patricia Miller** on her December marriage to **Henry Odom**. She donates her expertise in financial advice to the PJC Foundation and is assistant vice president and financial advisor at Merrill Lynch.

Congratulations to Foundation Governor Emeritus **Donnie McMahon** on being named Business Leader of the Year at the 49th Annual PACE Awards ceremony.

Congratulations to **Martin Gonzalez**, new PJC vice president of Instructional Affairs, and **Anthea Amos**, new director for PJC's Milton campus.



## Because of You, Scholarships Change Lives

We commend the following donors whose generous gifts are making a difference in the lives of students today and in the future. List is current through March 20, 2009.

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*From  
the desk of*

Patrice Whitten



Despite daunting economic times, Pensacola Junior College has much for which to be thankful.

While some university foundations are losing half of their investment portfolios, the PJC Foundation is holding firm as a result of careful planning and prudent, conservative investing.

The corpus of endowed funds such as scholarships, teaching and program chairs, and lecture series, always remains untouched at PJC with aid coming from interest earnings and matching dollars. Therefore, despite the economy's fluctuations, endowed funds held by the PJC Foundation will remain in perpetuity.

In addition, First Generation (see page 5) and Universal scholarships continue to be a means of changing our community for generations to come. With only 30 percent of Escambia and Santa Rosa county residents holding college degrees, these scholarships are a reliable investment in the world our children will inherit.

Thank you for helping us to help those who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend college.

Now, more than ever, your support is needed.

## Health Care Discovery Tour

The March Health Care Discovery tour gave the public a glimpse into the award winning Mary Ekdahl Smart Simulation Center on the Warrington campus. The event spotlighted the high-tech facility which recently was named a Center of Educational Excellence by Laerdal Medical Corp., the largest maker of high-fidelity simulators in the world.

PJC is only the second community college in North America to have a simulation center with this distinction.



## Investing in Hospitality

The Visitor Information Center supports PJC students studying culinary and hospitality management. This in turn keeps that industry vibrant in the Pensacola area, says VIC manager Larry Orvis, shown here with PJC Foundation Executive Director Patrice Whitten.

"The Hospitality Round Table is proud to show support and be a partner with PJC in sponsoring students enrolled in the Hospitality and Tourism career field," says Orvis. "Training received is a solid beginning to be not only part of the industry but a step up the ladder of industry manager and leadership."



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