

# ROCKY NOW

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*Rocky Now: Keeping our friends and supporters informed about what's new and exciting at Rocky Mountain College*

## All About Our Students



Photo: Dave M. Shumway, RMC

Maggie Dutcher, who was 2009 Master of Physician Assistant Studies Class President, was sworn in as an Air Force officer by Lt. Col. Fields, a retired Air Force PA and the associate director of the MPAS program.

If the Rocky Mountain College Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program ever needs a template for a successful student, it can model it on this year's class president, Maggie Dutcher. Inspired by "two aunts and one uncle who graduated from Rocky," Maggie knew RMC was where she wanted to pursue her Master of Physician Assistant Studies.

"I chose Rocky's PA program due to the location, small class size, and the vastly qualified faculty. Rocky has also been somewhat of a family tradition, so it's been nice to continue the tradition," she said.

As a first-year student in the MPAS program, Maggie began achieving honors. She was selected as the only civilian PA student in the western region to be recipient of an Air Force scholarship. She was selected out of a field of over 200 applicants for the award.

"It has also been a great honor to be commissioned as an Air Force Officer. I'm so excited and proud to serve with the U.S. Air Force while also being able to work as a PA in family practice. I will be committing at least three years, possibly more, depending on where things take me. I'm excited to explore opportunities within the healthcare field and in the Air Force. I really haven't had much exposure to the military lifestyle but have always had an interest in serving. I also have two assistant professors who are officers in the Air Force, Lt. Col. John Fields and Maj. Dwight Harley, who have provided great guidance and encouragement as I

(Please see **All About Our Students** inside)



Photo: Dan Burkhardt, RMC

Ethaniel Willes couldn't wait to see his mother Shelley's diploma during commencement for those earning a Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree. Looking on is Stephanie Winter, another member of the 26-member class.

## WHITE COATS

### A Standard of Excellence Established by 2010 Class

With a mission to provide quality medical services to underserved and rural populations, 26 students of the Rocky Mountain College Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program graduated during the annual White Coat Ceremony, August 26, 2010, at 1 p.m. on the Rocky Mountain College Green (south of the Bair Family Student Center).

The ceremony is named for when the graduates don their white coats, signifying they are now officially physician assistants.

"Not too long ago we had a program that was surviving, but because of you, that program was turned around and is now

thriving. In a way, you gambled on us and you trusted us and together we have made a positive impact in the community," President Michael Mace said.

"You were tested repeatedly and sometimes harshly, and you



Photo: Dan Burkhardt, RMC

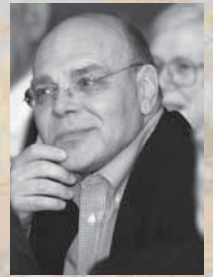
Jennifer Owen gets a congratulatory hug following the White Coat Ceremony.

(Please see **White Coats** on the back page)



# Insider

by Michael R. Mace, President



## Your Support Needed to Keep Wheels Turning

In Prescott Hall, where my office is located, are photographs of the beginnings of this College so many years ago; when students worked to quarry the rocks that became the first buildings on campus. In

some of the photographs sturdy draft horses were used to pull the wagons that brought the cut stones to the then new campus. These gentle giants were the horses that built the world and were the laboring steed of a by-gone era; a component of the history that closed the Montana frontier. I marvel at those timber-wheeled delivery wagons with the wooden



*Students invested "sweat equity" in helping establish the College. In the early days, they quarried the rock that was hauled to campus to construct buildings.*

spokes distributing the weight out from the hub to ease the burden for the wheels. Those spokes seem to say something to me about education here at Rocky Mountain College. Students are the center of our wheel; the hub for everything we do. The spokes represent the influences that radiate and sustain us. Another spoke of the wheel might be friends of the college; still another faith; and yet another the melding of the strength that creates the educational circle at

the helm of a student's career that encircles a life's calling. Each spoke contributes to the hub and vice versa, an interchange of strength and support. Without



*Photo: RMC Archives*

the equal distribution of weight, without the strength of each spoke, without determination of our students, faculty, staff, and donors, the wheel is weakened

Obviously, without the wheel, there is no progress, no rolling ahead. So it is that I look to many of you, and others like you, who are part of that radius of strength so important to

the education of our students, steering them onward, guiding them with your support and prayers.

Rocky Mountain College is about providing a transformational education to students. Our students are the resources that will go out into the world and make a difference, just as we hope to make a difference for them while they are here.

## Aviation Program Heralded by USCA

The Rocky Mountain College Aviation Program has been selected for the 2010 Best of Laurel Award in the Aircraft Schools category by the U.S. Commerce Association (USCA).

The USCA "Best of Local Business" Award Program recognizes outstanding local businesses throughout the country. Each year the USCA identifies companies and organizations that they believe have achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category. These are local companies that enhance the positive image of small business through service to their

customers and community. Various sources of information were gathered and analyzed to choose the winners in each category. The 2010 USCA Award Program focuses on quality, not quantity. Winners are determined based on the information gathered both internally by the USCA and data provided by third parties.

The U.S. Commerce Association (USCA) is a New York City-based organization funded by local businesses operating in towns, large and small, across America. The USCA was established to recognize the best of local businesses in their community.



## About Our Students

*(Continued from front)*

sought this opportunity," she said.

Being sworn in by Lt. Col. Fields, a retired Air Force PA and the associate director of the MPAS program, made the award even more meaningful, she noted. Following graduation from the RMC PA program next year, Maggie will be promoted to First Lieutenant and transferred to the Biomedical Sciences Corps where she will provide medical care as a PA in the Air Force.

Maggie is also president of her class and has been energetic in organizing a

variety of community outreach events.

"As a class, we have been involved in blood drives, 'Chicks in Science' fair, Relay for Life, a health fair, Donate Life, and Habitat for Humanity," she said. "It's been very rewarding to provide leadership in our class and to become involved in the community."

Maggie gives high marks to the RMC MPAS program.

"I feel like the program really has prepared me for my career. I can attribute this largely to the qualified faculty who is dedicated to making

us safe providers. The skills we have learned this first year have prepared us for the upcoming year in clinicals. I credit the entire faculty, especially Bob Wilmoth, John Fields, Dwight Harley, and Kelley McCormick -- they all have an unbelievable amount of experience and have taught us so much this past year," she said.

Maggie believes the MPAS program challenges all students, "leading us to discover personal strengths and weaknesses, while developing as a person as well as a future provider."

## Focus on Faculty & Staff

# Patient Safety the Top Priority

The success of the Rocky Mountain College Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program is “first and foremost made possible because a great team was assembled that focused on the challenges to the program and did not let diversity deter them,” according to RMC President Mike Mace.

Mace is referring to a program that was completely restructured in the wake of being placed on probationary status by ARC-PA (Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant).

“Under new, invigorated leadership by Dr. Robert Wilmouth, this program sought and received community support as well as support from both major hospitals (St. Vincent Healthcare and Billings Clinic) to turn it from surviving to thriving,” Mace said.

A self-effacing Dr. Wilmouth said the program simply matched its aim to its target, with a focus on strong clinical medicine and patient safety.

“We emphasize personal service excellence,” Dr. Wilmouth said. “Our students will lead the charge in it, as patient safety officers.”

The RMC program is dedicated to the education and training of physician assistants who will provide health care that is safe, current, evidence-based, and specifically targeted to primary care in rural areas.

“The program is committed to providing high quality education with patient safety as the top priority,” Dr. Wilmouth stated.

Emphasizing that focus is that the RMC program is the only program in the U.S. participating in a national patient safety program, called “Open School,”

*Dr. Bob Wilmouth heads a program that is no longer surviving but thriving thanks, he says, to the commitment of its students.*

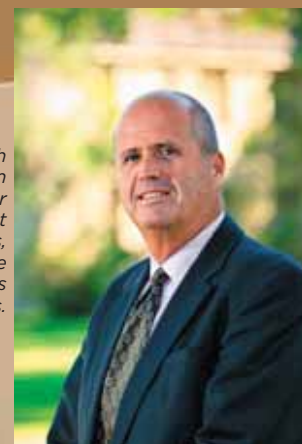


Photo:  
Dave M. Shumway,  
RMC

which is sponsored by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

The IHI Open School for Health Professions is an interprofessional educational community that gives students the skills to become change agents in health care improvement.

“We’re talking about skills like

*(Please see **Focus on Faculty & Staff** on the back page)*

## Focus on Alumni & Friends

# From One Doctor to Other Doctors

An appreciation for Rocky Mountain College began for Wheeler “Dan” Daniels, M.D., when he was an orthopedic surgeon in Billings. Introduced to the late Dr. Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr. and his wife, Dr. Linda Scott DeRosier, by then RMC Board Member Bob Nantz and his wife, Penny, Dr. Daniels was soon in Rocky’s orbit.

“Arthur was an evangelist for Rocky and he first recruited me for the RMC National Advisory Council he was forming, and later that lead to me becoming a member of the RMC Board of Trustees,” Dr. Daniels explained, recalling that first introduction to Rocky.

Dr. Daniels also served as an adjunct professor for the fledgling Physician Assistant Program, which he helped start.

Dr. Daniels earned his bachelor’s degree at Dartmouth, his medical degree at Temple University, and did his residency in Indianapolis, but nevertheless he had great respect for small, private colleges like Rocky and smaller cities, like Billings.

“I think Billings needs Rocky and Rocky needs Billings,” he said. “They are good for each other. I’ve seen the kind of students Rocky produces and they are exceptional.”

Dr. Daniels cherishes many of the connections he made with “good people at Rocky, including George Selover and the DeRosiers,” he said.

“I had good experiences with the people I was involved with.”

Dr. Daniels considered himself a faculty advocate when he served on the Board.

One major event – the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center – caused a re-evaluation of what he considered important.

“I volunteered to work at Ground Zero for six weeks,” he said. “I wanted to contribute in a different way.”

Having served in the Army, Dr. Daniels sought a position with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, commonly referred to as the Veterans Administration Hospital. Feeling he also needed to be in a bigger city, he relocated to Denver where he secured a position with a VA medical center.

“It’s a teaching hospital and I’m supervising third-year med students, which is ideal for me,” he said.

He also treats patients in the orthopedic clinic.

In a way, Dr. Daniels exemplifies a t-shirt that his friend, Dr. Claire Oakley, RMC professor of biology and allied health, wears sometimes. It states, “Those who can, DO. Those who can do more, TEACH.”

While Dr. Daniels relocated and “retooled” his career, he still maintained his admiration for Rocky Mountain College. Before he left, he created the Daniels Endowed Scholarship, which is bestowed upon a worthy biology major/



Photo: Courtesy

*Dr. Wheeler “Dan” Daniels wanted to create a legacy that would help future students, so he invested in a scholarship endowment designed to help worthy biology major/pre-med students.*



Photo: Dave M. Shumway, RMC

*Dr. Barry McKenzie was the first student to receive a Daniels Scholarship that helped him complete his education so he could pursue his medical degree. He is now a practicing physician with Surgical Associates in Billings.*

*(Please see **Focus on Alumni & Friends** next page)*

# Neighbor to Neighbor

## Good Consequences Result from Good Acts

By Barb Skelton,  
Chairman of the Board of Rocky Mountain College

Often the phrase “What goes around, comes around” is used to talk about someone who has done something wrong which will eventually be righted, kind of a zen prescription that there will be consequences.

But just as often it could be an expression of how the good things one does are circulated, creating more good, kind of a “pass it along” effort.

When I heard that Sally McIntosh was going to assume the role of director of the Ryniker-Morrison Gallery, I knew this was a good “what goes around, comes around” appointment.

For years and years, Sally has helped Rocky Mountain College. The McIntosh Art store she operated downtown was blocks from Rocky but she treated it as if she was just down the street. Rocky art students



Photo: Dave M. Shumway, RMC  
Sally McIntosh is the new director of Ryniker-Morrison Gallery in Tech Hall.

knew they'd get a discount, and many of them were hired to work there. Rocky art professors knew she'd carry items that she wouldn't ordinarily carry if it was something needed for their classes. For a dozen years she operated the summer art academy at Rocky, introducing a whole new generation to the freedom and wonders of creative expression, whether it was chalk on sidewalks or paper mâché. Sally shared her wealth, helping to promote and organize the Artwalk where

people wandered from one gallery to the next to see a variety of works in sculpture, paint, and woodcarving. She was a good neighbor to so many of the artists and the people enjoying the art!

I like that the first show she'll be holding in our gallery will feature the work of Barbara Morrison, the daughter of retired RMC Art Professor Bob Morrison. It was interesting that the same week she announced that showing, another daughter



Photo: Dave M. Shumway, RMC  
Rebecca Baken won a meal ticket for her prize-winning mural design.

of one of our current art professors stated she was following in her father's footsteps. Rebecca Baken, whose design for a mural in the student dining room won her the chance to bring it to life, said she loved the fact that her dad, Jim Baken, had two works of art exhibited nearby. Thanks to Sodexo for contributing a much-appreciated prize for the mural - a meal ticket worth \$1,800 - showing that they give back and are good neighbors.

These are all examples of what goes around, comes around at Rocky -- good neighbors helping other neighbors for the good of the whole community.

## Focus on Alumni & Friends

(Continued from previous page)

pre-med student, as determined by Dr. Oakley.

“I am proud to say that my colleagues and I believe in human potential, and thus we invest our careers in helping students understand and then develop their potential. Thus, it is exciting and gratifying when other people understand that commitment to education, and then financially invest in our students. Clearly, we need more people willing and able to invest in students,” said Dr. Oakley.

“Dr. Daniels has invested in RMC through his volunteer efforts as an informed and questioning trustee, and through his establishment of an endowed scholarship that assists students in attaining their educational goals -- what a wonderful way to spend one's time and money. I am reminded of the bumper sticker that says: If you think education is expensive, think about the cost of ignorance,” Dr. Oakley said.

The first Daniels scholar, Dr. Barry

McKenzie, RMC '99, is now a practicing physician with Surgical Associates in Billings, according to Dr. Oakley.

“When I think of Dr. Barry McKenzie, I have to smile. He is an example of a student who stayed locally for college and had the world opened up to him -- an essential attribute of RMC and college in general. Barry did not come to RMC to study biology and apply to medical school -- instead, he found his way to the biology program and changed his dreams to compete for a seat in medical school -- the small classes and focus on exploring different disciplines is what helped him find his way to coming back to Billings and joining a surgery practice. This is a perfect example of the delayed gratification and reliance on emotional rewards required of faculty -- we are proud of calling him an alumnus.”

As for the first recipient's view on the value of a Rocky education and the Daniels scholarship, both were critically important to his current job as a trauma

doctor. Dr. Barry McKenzie said when he received the scholarship, “it did a lot to help me not have to go in deep debt for my college education so I could concentrate on my studies.”

Dr. McKenzie initially joined the Physician Assistant Studies Program, but his internship with trauma doctors convinced him he wanted to be a doctor. The Billings Senior High grad respected those who were saving lives in the St. Vincent Healthcare Emergency Room.

“The education I received at Rocky made it possible for me to get into a good med program at the University of North Dakota. I am now a general surgeon with Surgical Associates which handles trauma care for St. Vincent Healthcare, so it's full circle.”

“Without that scholarship, I would have diverted energy and worry to how to pay for a good education, and how good an education that was verified by how competitive and successful Rocky students are in getting into med schools.”



# RMC Internship Rewards Student



(Photo courtesy of David Grubbs, *The Billings Gazette*)

Lee Holmberg's internship helped him apply what he learned in his classes at RMC.

orchards and other agricultural settings. Holmberg uses sophisticated lab equipment to make sure Scentry's products work as they're supposed to.

One might guess that an intern working in a chemistry lab would be delegated to the most mundane tasks like washing test tubes or making sure all the chemicals are stocked.

"This job is not like that at all," Holmberg said. "We are tasked with a project and we literally have to figure out how it works. There are so many steps, and it never gets boring. I have to apply myself to make sure we are doing everything correctly. I like that."

Amanda Ramsey, manager of chemistry and product development for Scentry Biologicals, said Holmberg works in quality assurance and quality control to make sure that the raw materials and the final products meet rigorous specifications.

Some of Scentry's lures use pheromones, chemicals that influence the behavior or development of insects, as an active ingredient. But the lure's effectiveness can suffer if the manufacturing process isn't quite right.

"You can have too much pheromone in the lure," Ramsey said. "We do a lot of testing to ensure that the pheromone level is just right."

This is Holmberg's second internship. Previously, he collected water samples from the Little Bighorn River to search for strains of bacteria that have become resistant to antibiotics, which are used extensively by humans and in livestock feeding operations.

Holmberg is among thousands of college students who are spending their summers in internships that are intended to provide practical experience within their chosen profession. Internships are intended to pave the way for permanent employment after graduation. Today's tight job market is especially difficult for recent college graduates, and internships are seen as a way to gain valuable on-the-job experience.

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 83 percent of graduating students held internships in 2008, up from just 9 percent in 1992. That translates into hundreds of thousands of students participating in internships each year.

Blaire Brush, RMC director of career services, said internships are required for most students. A contract involving the student, the employer, and the College spells out expectations and responsibilities for each participant, she said.

Internships are supposed to be learning experiences. Occasionally, an intern will complain that he was stuck with only menial tasks. Under Rocky's guidelines, no more than 20 percent of an intern's work can be clerical, Brush said.

For Holmberg, mundane work was never an issue.

"I couldn't possibly find a better job in the summer," Holmberg said.

(By Tom Howard and reprinted with permission from *Billings Business*, August 2010.)

Lee Holmberg relishes the opportunity to spend his summer wearing a lab coat each day and doing hands-on science.

The Rocky Mountain College senior has done his share of summer jobs, including construction. But an internship in the lab at Scentry Biologicals, Inc., of Billings helps him apply what he learned in the classroom.

Scentry Biologicals manufactures pest management products such as insect traps and lures used in

## Coming Attractions

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Rocky Mountain College will honor Reverend Kristi Foster with a formal Installation Ceremony at 11 a.m. in Taylor Auditorium of Losekamp Hall. For more information: Brad Nason, Rocky Mountain College dean of student life, (406) 657-1018 / nasonb@rocky.edu or Rev. Kristi Foster, RMC chaplain, (406) 657-1098 / kristi.foster@rocky.edu.

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Annual Rocky Mountain College Phonathon to raise money for student scholarships begins. Contact Vicki Davison, director of alumni relations and special events, at 406-657-1005 or email: vicki.davison@rocky.edu.

### FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1 & 2

Parents Weekend at RMC: On Friday, parents will be able to attend classes with students or arrange to take a campus tour. At 4:30 p.m., there will be a Welcome Reception and "State of the College" address by President Mike Mace in Fraley Lounge at the Bair Student Center. On Saturday, a Battlin' Bears tailgate party will begin at 10:30 a.m. Parents will receive free passes to the 1:00 p.m. football game against Eastern Oregon. Contact Vicki Davison, director of alumni relations and special events, at 406-657-1005 or email: vicki.davison@rocky.edu.



### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30

Rocky Mountain College Homecoming: RMC hosts Montana Tech for the annual Battlin' Bears Homecoming Game, 1 p.m., Herb Klindt Field. (More details in the next Rocky Now.) Contact Vicki Davison, director of alumni relations and special events, at 406-657-1005 or email: vicki.davison@rocky.edu.

### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5

The Black Tie Blue Jeans 23rd Annual Scholarship Benefit at the Billings Hotel & Convention Center, beginning at 6 p.m. Contact Vicki Davison, director of alumni relations and special events, at 406-657-1005 or email: vicki.davison@rocky.edu.

## Focus on Faculty & Staff

*(Continued from inside)*

quality improvement, patient safety, teamwork, leadership, and patient-centered care. Employers are looking for these skills, and patients expect providers to have them. But most schools barely touch on these topics," according to Don Berwick, IHI's former president and CEO.

The MPAS is a 26-month program that trains highly skilled medical professionals. The RMC program holds active accreditation from the ARC-PA (Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant).

Faculty includes three PA-C's, three Ph.D.'s, and four MD's with over 100 years of both educational and clinical experience.

Graduates from ARC-PA-accredited PA programs are eligible to sit for the PANCE (Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination) and become licensed to practice. Over the past five years, the program's average pass rate for first-time PANCE testing is 92%.

The Rocky Mountain College MPAS Program participates in the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). Currently, more than two-thirds of all accredited PA programs, including Rocky Mountain College, participate in CASPA.

## White Coats

*(Continued from front)*

prevailed. You created a standard of excellence, not just in the community, but in the classroom where you demonstrated knowledge that put you in the top 10 percent of all schools nationally. And there are some pretty heavy hitters in that elite group," he added.

The RMC program is dedicated to the education and training of physician assistants who will provide health care that is safe, current, evidence-based, and specifically targeted to primary care in rural areas, Dr. Wilmouth said.

"The program is committed to providing high quality education with patient safety as the top priority," Dr. Wilmouth stated. "We emphasize personal service excellence. Our students will lead the charge in it, as patient safety officers."

The good news for this year's graduates is half already have jobs, Wilmouth said, with most of those bound for small town critical access hospitals in Montana, Wyoming,

Utah, Idaho, and the Dakotas.

Dr. Dave Klein, medical director of the program, praised their academic achievement and told the graduates they have a bright future.

"We don't know what's going to happen with health care delivery in the future for sure, we know a little bit of it," Dr. Klein told the graduates. "We do know whatever direction it takes, you new physician assistants are going to be a very important part of it."

In a speech both humorous and moving, Class President Amanda Langemo thanked friends and family for enduring support.

"Just a warning, we will still need to mooch food," she joked. "I'm 100 percent serious about that."

The MPAS is a 26-month program that trains highly skilled medical professionals. The RMC program holds active accreditation from the ARC-PA (Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant).

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