

Summer 2017

# ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE

## MAGAZINE



### A STUDENT-READY COLLEGE:

SPC strives to meet the needs of its diverse group of students.

### THE LEGACY OF LAW:

Dr. Bill Law's retirement ushers in a new era.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear Friends,

As I embark on my retirement, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have worked tirelessly alongside me these past seven years – from faculty and staff to community leaders and legislators.

I now ask you all to join me in welcoming Dr. Tonjua Williams as St. Petersburg College's next president. I cannot imagine a better choice for the position than Dr. Williams, a dear friend and treasured colleague who has dedicated her life to this college and has been instrumental to the gains we've made to advance student success.

During my tenure here, we have implemented several initiatives that make St. Petersburg College proud. We renewed our efforts to provide integrated academic and social supports for students; became national leaders in the development of career and academic pathways to give students a clear roadmap to success; overhauled our advising model to better serve students; and elevated our professional development opportunities to ensure growth that would positively impact our students. One of my proudest moments as president was to witness the opening of the Midtown Center, a living embodiment of SPC's commitment to providing educational equity.

These are but a few of the accomplishments we have been able to achieve as we worked together toward a common goal of preparing students for successful careers – and lives. I am confident that Dr. Williams, with her many years of experience with the college and her strong ties to the community, will lead St. Petersburg College in a positive direction over the years to come.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve this college and be a part of a community that is so dedicated to providing quality educational opportunities to all. I look forward to watching the college's continued growth and success in helping our community members achieve their dreams.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill".

Bill Law,  
Former President, St. Petersburg College



Dear SPC Community,

I cannot express enough how thankful and humbled I am to be selected to lead St. Petersburg College as its seventh president. I am especially honored to have the opportunity to build upon Dr. Bill Law's legacy of focusing on student success.

After 30 years at SPC, I've had the unique opportunity to see the college through the eyes of an adjunct, a provost and a senior vice president of student services. As a lifetime member of the Pinellas County community, I've watched the college grow to its current impressive size, and I know how actively entwined SPC is with the community.

The success of SPC is achieved collectively, and I am a product of that success. I stand on the shoulders of so many people who helped me along the way. I, along with the entire college, offer my own shoulders now to lift up our community members who wish to better their lives through education.

The theme of this issue is "reinvesting in our community." This has always been part of our mission at SPC, and you'll see the evidence of our strong community relationships in the stories within this issue of SPC Magazine, including:

- Our new Bay Pines STEM Center, which will offer SPC students and faculty, along with local K-12 educators and students, the chance to do meaningful research and practice real science
- The college's musical instrument drive that provided almost 100 instruments for local students in need
- Our Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, which is helping all of St. Petersburg College – students, faculty and staff - get organized to give back to our community

Enjoy our summer issue of SPC Magazine – may it inspire you to engage in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tonjua Williams".

Tonjua Williams  
President, St. Petersburg College

Dr. Bill Law, St. Petersburg College's sixth president, retired on June 30, 2017. The Board of Trustees unanimously selected Dr. Tonjua Williams as the college's seventh president on May 31, 2017. She assumed the office on July 3, 2017. As most readers know, Williams is a St. Petersburg native and a 30-year veteran of SPC. The college family sends its best wishes to Dr. Law for his retirement, and welcomes Dr. Williams in her new role.



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# 2017 NOTABLE AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

## JANUARY

- Alisha Vitale, Director of Pre-Admissions, awarded the Department of Defense Patriot Award by Florida Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense program

## FEBRUARY

- St. Petersburg College honored with the Economic Advancement Award by Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce
- SPC Baseball player Chris Busch named NJCAA Region 8 Baseball Player of the Week

## MARCH

- SPC President Bill Law recognized by First Baptist Institutional Church as the first honoree to receive the H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Everyday) Education Award
- More than \$1.7 million in scholarships awarded by the SPC Foundation

## APRIL

- SPC's Titan Basketball team named 2017 Florida State Champions
- SPC President Bill Law given the Department of Defense Seven Seals Award for his exceptional initiative and leadership in support of SPC faculty, staff and students serving with the Seven National Guard or Reserve Armed Services
- SPC's Model United Nations team earned the Outstanding Delegation Award at the National Model United Nations (NMUN) Conference

## MAY

- Dr. Tonjua Williams selected as the college's seventh president
- SPC Women's Tennis Team placed third in the nation at the NJCAA National Championships and team members Dokoro Chishaki and Anita Detlava were crowned National Champions in doubles

## JUNE

- College awarded \$620,000 National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education Project grant
- Learning Centers named in honor of outgoing SPC President Bill Law
- Dedication ceremony held for the Maria Nieves Edmonds Women on the Way Center
- Dedication ceremony held for the John M. Chapin, Ph.D., Science Labs at the new Bay Pines STEM Center



# A FOND FAREWELL



**F**or the first three days of Dr. Bill Law's tenure at St. Petersburg College, his new office sat empty. In those three days in June 2010, Law began at Tarpon Springs and made his way south until he'd visited each and every one of SPC's campuses. Law visited with students, faculty and staff to gather feedback on what the college needed from him.

Last month, Law was again surrounded by members of the SPC community, this time as they bade him a fond farewell. Law, SPC's sixth president, retired June 30 after seven years with the college and more than 40 years in higher education.

Law will be remembered for uniting and expanding the college. Some of his contributions include:

- A tenure focused on student success, including the transformation of college libraries into highly successful Learning Centers; the development of The College Experience, an integrated approach to higher education; the use of data to inform initiatives; and the

development of Guided Pathways and Career and Academic Communities

- Employee-focused initiatives, including Leadership SPC, Delta Academy and the Career Service Employee Council
- The strategic expansion of SPC facilities, especially the creation of the Midtown and Bay Pines centers
- The revitalization of SPC's Online Education programs and Accessibility Services

At this spring's commencement ceremonies, Board of Trustees Chair Bill Foster paid a special tribute to Law, noting that he'd probably shaken the hand of somewhere around 50,000 graduating students over the years.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees, the faculty and the students, congratulations on a career that has changed the lives of tens of thousands of students," Foster said. "You've left your legacy on St. Petersburg College."





# AND A LASTING LEGACY

St. Petersburg College graduate Maria Thurber said Law personally changed the course of her life for the better.

"Dr. Law gave me courage by believing in me," Thurber said. "He reminded me that I had to follow my dreams, which gave me the confidence I have up to this day."

*Donna Smith is a Multimedia Content Developer in SPC's Marketing and Strategic Communications Department. She can be reached at [smith.donna@spcollege.edu](mailto:smith.donna@spcollege.edu).*

*SPC graduate Lindsey Velde contributed to this article.*





# AN INVITING ENVIRONMENT

THE NEW BAY PINES STEM CENTER IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE TAMPA BAY AREA

**T**his summer, St. Petersburg College completed construction on the new Bay Pines STEM Center, a state-of-the-art facility on 40 acres of wetland on the Intracoastal Waterway in St. Petersburg.

The facility will provide research laboratories and opportunities for teaching and learning for college students and faculty, as well as local K-12 school systems and the community. College officials predict the new center will further establish SPC as a leader in educating a STEM-focused workforce and serve to increase science, technology, engineering and math literacy in the region.

"New sampling equipment and the development of innovative, real-world lab and undergraduate research experiences will enhance learning, while also preparing graduates for employment or further education," said Dr. Natavia Middleton, Dean of Natural Sciences and Engineering.

## ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

The property was acquired by the college many years ago, but the vision for the space began to take shape about five years ago, after former SPC President Bill Law and the late Dr. John Chapin, former Dean of Natural Science, began discussions about how to turn the property into a STEM center to benefit the college and the community.

When Dr. Linae Boehme, now Interim Director, was hired in 2013, Law charged her with helping Chapin acquire funding from the Florida Legislature.

"We wanted to get people excited about science and also develop the people we need in those fields," Boehme said.

At the same time, Chapin and Boehme, along with Education Chair Dr. Meg Delgado, set to work on the mission.



"We toured other facilities, worked with architects, held Collaborative Labs with our partners and developed the concept for a facility for undergraduate research, classroom space, conferences, guest speakers, and professional development for teachers," Delgado said.

In 2014, the Legislature approved \$5 million in funding for the \$5.3 million project.

## PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT HANDS-ON LEARNING

Boehme is working with multiple organizations on issues such as additional funding and equipment, joint research projects and internships.

"I'm interacting with science and business members to get them engaged in the project," she said.

SPC students will benefit from the center in many ways. Those who are studying to go into STEM fields will have access to equipment and experiential opportunities they didn't have before.

"They'll have the ability to do science in a realistic way, as opposed to, 'I did this one time in a lab,'" Boehme said.

Delgado agreed, calling the building and property "integrated open-air laboratories."

"If we don't find ways to give them this authentic experience, then we don't have opportunities to cultivate potential talent," Delgado said. "And there is a lot of talent at SPC."

Boehme says that even students who don't want to go into STEM careers will benefit, as the center will increase their awareness of scientific reasoning and policy decision making.

"That is so powerful," she said, "because you're bringing up the science education of the entire community. We want to make sure citizens and voters are as educated as possible."



## HONORING THE LEGACY OF DR. JOHN CHAPIN

On June 28, hundreds of people gathered at the center for the dedication of the John M. Chapin, Ph.D. Science Labs. Dr. Chapin retired in September 2016 and passed away in February 2017 after a short battle with Lou Gehrig's Disease.



Though Chapin did not live to see the project completed, he was able to visit the property and see the building while it was under construction. His vision and drive to make the center a community fixture will affect generations of future students who will benefit from his vision.

"Dr. Chapin's heart and soul was about the STEM Center, particularly the opportunities it would provide to engage middle and high school students and draw them to the College," Boehme said. "He also wanted to provide them an area with some good technology and real instruments so they could move into not just SPC, but science and engineering in general. He put so much time into it."

# NT

## BAY AREA.

### EDUCATING FUTURE SCIENTISTS

Delgado says the center will offer middle and high school students the chance to develop an understanding of science and its concepts in a way they can't in a regular classroom.

"They'll see that science is a creative process. It's messy. It doesn't necessarily go how you want it to. We need to help our kids understand that you do need to fail sometimes in order to figure things out."

K-12 students will gain meaningful science experiences, while learning about careers in STEM fields and what SPC has to offer them.

"We can show them that right in their own backyard there are degrees, scholarships and transfer options that will get them on a path to success," Delgado said.

Additionally, the space can be used as a teaching incubator for K-12 educators, where they can do short courses to strengthen their content knowledge. Delgado also envisions even more professional development, including one-day workshops and summer institutes - but first comes funding.

"Now that we have a home base," she said, "we have the potential to be regional and national once we have the formula. It's going to be a game changer."

# FOR LEARNING



### IMPACTING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

One piece of the community plan allows for citizen science: a space where people can work on projects like monitoring air and water quality or conducting bird or insect surveys, then take the research back to their own neighborhoods.

"This beautiful property gives the community an oasis where they can interact with it to experience the sights, the sounds, and the smells," Boehme said. "We also have a community room where groups can have meetings and speakers."

Delgado and Boehme believe the facility will be the perfect place to host camps, including science, math and robotics camps, and SPC is the perfect hub to meet those needs with the pooled talent of our students, educators and the community.

"It's going to be fantastic," Boehme said. "There's so much excitement about it, just from the faculty alone. When you have that kind of collaboration and excited faculty members, the sky is the limit."

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# ONLINE RENEWAL AT SPC



## SPC STUDENTS HAVE THE BENEFIT OF A GROWING LIST OF PROGRAMS THAT CAN BE COMPLETED ONLINE.

**S**t. Petersburg College Senior Amy Howland's struggles with social anxiety made her think that college was not a possibility. Then she heard about SPC's online Associate in Arts degree, took the leap and began working on her degree in Fall of 2015. Being able to take classes in the comfort of her own home suddenly made her dream seem achievable.

"I found myself thriving under the guidance and instruction of the best professors imaginable," Howland said. "I was enjoying online interactions with my fellow students. For the first time in my life, my zeal for learning is coupled with a love of attending school."

Since 1998, SPC has offered students the opportunity to complete coursework online. Over the years, the online program has grown as technology has advanced and the college has increased the number of courses to accommodate the growing number of students eager to earn credits on their own time. Now, about half of SPC's programs can be completed fully online. And in 2016, Online Colleges ranked St. Petersburg College number one out of 112 Florida peer institutions for Best Online College.

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## REVITALIZATION OF ONLINE COURSES

What makes SPC's online programs unique is the commitment to continuous improvement to ensure students are receiving engaging content that provides them with the most efficient and effective educational experience possible. That commitment to improvement brought about revitalization efforts, which will make SPC's online offerings even more engaging and effective.

During this revitalization process, each department's dean and faculty review course objectives and curriculum and refine as necessary. Content and assignments are created in collaboration with the Instructional Design and Development team and put forth for review and revision by faculty members.

The first course to be revitalized was Studies in Applied Ethics. Ethics Instructors Joanne Hopkins and Nick Manias were appointed as Development Facilitators. Hopkins said they've had a great student success rate with the course – comparable to face-to-face classes.

"Ethics lends itself to online learning because it's not a memorize-and-take-a-test kind of course," Hopkins said. "Plus, online is almost like working one-on-one with the students because most will take advantage of communicating with their instructor on a regular basis. I can give feedback, and they can resubmit things and I can actually see how they learned."

## ONLINE COURSES = SCHEDULING FLEXIBILITY

About a third of SPC students are completing fully online degrees, with another third taking a mixture of online and face-to-face classes. Graduate Danielle Largent earned her associate degree in Health Information Technology in May 2017 while working full time at a local children's hospital. Largent is also mother to a seven-year-old daughter, and she travels internationally with her family. She began taking general courses in traditional classrooms, but struggled with scheduling.

"I kept running into the issue of finding time to attend classes and still balance my life as a working mother," she said. "After speaking with an advisor at SPC, I found out that my program is a fully online degree."

Largent dove in and, after a couple of weeks, she got the hang of it. She credited her supportive instructors with building quality courses.

"The instructors for the online courses give the students enough resources for them to really learn and interact with the rest of the class. The videos, links and discussions are great tools for an online student to succeed," she said.

Associate Vice President for Online Learning & Services Dr. Susan Colaric said one of the keys to SPC's success is that online learners receive all the same tools as traditional students.

"Anything that a student can do on campus, they can do online," Colaric said. "Every library resource can be accessed online. Tutoring can be done online 24/7 - though online learners can also use the on-campus tutors."

Largent said she made good use of the tutoring services, no matter where she was or what she needed.

"With so many different campuses around me, I can make an appointment that works for me or just walk in," Largent said. "SPC (also) has an online library that has helped me with citations and research for projects without ever having to leave my house. Last summer I went to Iceland for a couple of weeks with my family, and I was able to still get all my schoolwork done and get the tutoring I needed."



## ACCESS TO ONLINE EDUCATION CHANGES LIVES

St. Petersburg College student William Wantling hit a low point in his life when he found himself out of a job - and a home. When he visited the admissions office at SPC's Downtown Center, he found that he was eligible for a Pell Grant, so he enrolled in the Computer Support Certificate program.

Wantling achieved his dream of becoming CompTIA A+ certified, then earned a Microsoft Technology Associate Certificate for Windows Server - all online. Wantling was named the 2017 Outstanding Online Student at the International Technology Council (ITC) eLearning Conference in February. Wantling is now gainfully employed and has pulled himself out of homelessness.

"I now have the skills needed to resume a career in information technology - with many opportunities," Wantling said.

Howland has decided to keep going and get a bachelor's degree in history. She credits U.S. History instructor Dr. Angela Zombek for inspiring her to not only earn a degree in history, but to pursue a career teaching it.

"When I read articles that allude to teachers of online classes not having an impact on students, I am proof this is not the case," Howland said.

"I've come a long way from having such severe anxiety that I couldn't even attend class to wanting to teach a classroom of my own. I'm proud to say that's what St. Petersburg College's online program has done for me."

## ONLINE COURSES HELP STUDENTS WITH COMPUTER LITERACY

Desiree Solito's busy work and family schedule made the online Health Services Administration bachelor's degree a perfect fit.

"Access codes, PowerPoint - it was all so new to me. I didn't even know how to send an e-mail attachment," she said.

But Solito persevered and, with the help of SPC's technical support staff, she not only learned in her program, but also upped her computer skills.

"I have learned so much," she said. "I have grown in my education, in my use and knowledge of technology, and also in my confidence. You can teach an older dog new tricks - even computers!"

Colaric says online enrollment is on the rise, and the longevity of the program has allowed SPC to perfect the student experience.

"It's very organized, collaborative and cohesive," she said. "If you go from Accounting I to Accounting II, everyone has learned the same thing. The syllabi are all structured similarly."



## DEANGELO GIBBS

**Age:** 30

**Major:** B.A.S. in Veterinary Technology

**Expected date of graduation:**

December 2018

**Goals:** Complete a bachelor's degree in Veterinary Technology and a master's in Science

**Why SPC?** SPC has a great program that's close to home.

**What student support resource do you use most?**

Academic advisor

**Where is your favorite place to study?** Library

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** Stay focused and work hard

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?**

Providing the resources needed to help me get to the next level



## ALEXANDRIA CARBONARO

**Age:** 19

**Major:** EMT/EMS

**Expected date of graduation:**

September 2017

**Goals:** Graduate from the University of South Florida with a bachelor's degree in Mathematics

**Why SPC?** I like the amazing teachers and tutors.

**What student support resource do you use most?**

I love the advisors – they are really nice and helpful.

**Where is your favorite place to study?** I like the Learning Support Commons at the Clearwater Campus and café in Tarpon Springs.

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** SPC is great! But warning: don't take 14 credits in one summer.

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?** SPC helped me get my college life started.



*President Dr. Tonjua Williams is focused on ensuring that SPC is a “student-ready” college prepared to support and encourage all types of learners, from all backgrounds. Meet just a few of the individuals who make up our diverse student body - and reflect the community we serve.*

# A STUDENT-READY

## T'NORA DESSAW

**Age:** 19

**Major:** Associate in Arts

**Expected date of graduation:** 2018

**Goals:**

My future goal is to become a special agent for the Drug Enforcement Agency

**Clubs/Activities:** Student Government | Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society | Women on the Way

**Why SPC?** It's close to home and so much less expensive than other colleges.

**What student support resource do you use most?**

I use the writing studio the most for help with writing papers for my classes.

**Where is your favorite place to study?** My favorite place to study is in my room.

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** I would tell them to utilize all the resources the college offers.

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?**

SPC has helped me work toward my goals by awarding me scholarships and giving me many volunteer opportunities.



## JUSTIN OLIVAS

**Age:** 26

**Major:** Mechanical Engineering

**Expected date of graduation:**

July 2018

**Goals:** Graduate from SPC then transfer to Florida State University

**Clubs/Activities:** Student Government Association President (Seminole Campus)

**Why SPC?** The resources are great and everyone is kind and helpful.

**What student support resource do you use most?**

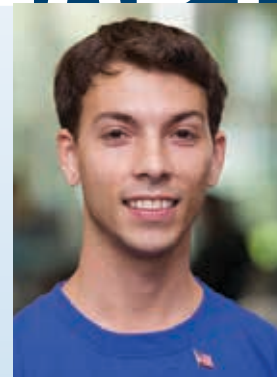
Learning Support Commons, Student Life And Leadership, and Career Services

**Where is your favorite place to study?** Student Life Center and Learning Support Commons

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** Enjoy your experience and don't be afraid to ask for anything. Everyone is looking to help.

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?**

The environment is a positive place to be that allows growth and support to accomplish goals.



## MARY J. SMITH

**Age:** 37

**Major:** B.A.S. Technology Management and Development

**Expected date of graduation:** December 2017

**Goals:** Securing a job in technology | Buying a home | Paying off student loans

**Clubs/Activities:** Women on the Way (WOW)

**Why SPC?** It's local, fair tuition rates and the class sizes are small.

**Where is your favorite place to study?** Starbucks

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** Go see a student advisor, check out the programs and visit the campuses.

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?** They've supported me financially and emotionally and the staff is amazing.



## KATRICE ARCHIE

**Age:** 30

**Major:** Nursing

**Expected date of graduation:** August 2020

**Goals:** I want to graduate from SPC with my bachelor's degree in nursing, then transfer to the University of South Florida to complete my master's degree in nursing.

**Clubs/Activities:** Student Government – President at Midtown Campus | Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society | Women on the Way | Student Support Services Club

**Why SPC?** I live in the community, and I was told that SPC is the best college in Pinellas County.

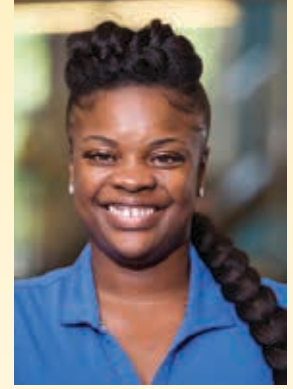
**What student support resource do you use most?** I often use the library and tutoring resources, especially the math and writing tutors.

**Where is your favorite place to study?**

I love the study room at the Midtown Center library.

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** You will succeed if you stay focused, utilize the resources and tutors and stay self-motivated.

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?** SPC's clubs and organizations have provided many scholarships, free book lending, one-on-one personal advising and made registration very easy because, since I'm involved in clubs, I can pick my classes two days before everyone else.



# COLLEGE

## GIACOMA LIBERATO

**Age:** 17

**Major:** Associate in Arts

**Expected date of graduation:** May 2018

**Goals:** College professor and social justice activist

**Clubs/Activities:** Honors Program/ Honors Consortium | Women on the Way | Black Student Union – Harambee | Latinos United

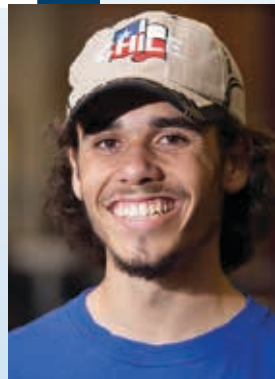
**Why SPC?** SPC is an institution that provides students opportunities that they otherwise wouldn't receive.

**What student support resource do you use most?** Student Life and Leadership or the library tutoring center

**Where is your favorite place to study?** St. Pete/Gibbs Library and SS Lobby

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** Do it! Probably the best decision I've ever made! You'll meet so many amazing students, faculty and staff.

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?** The classes have taught me a lot of practical information such as how to improve my writing, understand statistics and understand history.



## ERIC TSAI

**Age:** 39

**Major:** Public Policy and Administration | Law Enforcement Academy

**Expected date of graduation:** September 2017

**Goals:** Gain employment as a law enforcement officer

**Clubs/Activities:** Alpha Phi Sigma | Golden Key | Student Veterans Association

**Why SPC?** The location is convenient.

**What student support resource do you use most?** Learning Support Commons

**Where is your favorite place to study?** Learning Support Commons, cafeteria and Starbucks

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** Don't give up! | Balance your personal life and your course load | Enjoy the moments

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?** Smaller classes provide a better learning environment. Clubs and organizations allow students with common goals to help the community and each other.



## KOKORO CHISHAKI

**Age:** 20

**Major:** Associate in Arts

**Expected date of graduation:**  
May 2018

**Goals:** Graduate

**Clubs/Activities:** SPC women's tennis team

**Why SPC?** SPC women's tennis team

**What student support resource do you use most?**  
Advisors

**Where is your favorite place to study?** Library

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** Be prepared and study hard.

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?**  
Everyone helped me to stay focused on school.



## EDWIN LEE GREENE

**Age:** 63

**Major:** Hospitality Management

**Goals:** A career in the hotel industry

**Clubs/Activities:** Student Government Association

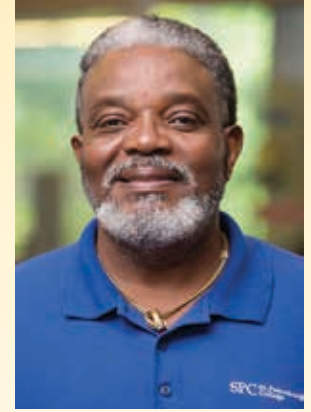
**Why SPC?** It was a local college and based near my home

**What student support resource do you use most?**  
Library and tutoring center

**Where is your favorite place to study?** Library and home

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** Be prepared to work hard to complete your studies.

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?** I have received a good amount of assistance and thank each person who has assisted me with my studies.



# A STUDENT-READY COLLEGE

## COREY MACDONALD

**Major:** Associate in Arts

**Expected date of graduation:**  
December 2017

**Goals:** I want to get my bachelor's degree from SPC in Public Policy and Administration, then earn a master's degree in political management.

**Clubs/Activities:** Student Government – Former president at Tarpon Springs Campus | Lead broadcaster, SPC sports | Florida College System Student Government Association, District 3 Legislative liaison

**Why SPC?** I love how SPC is part of my community. It feels like a second home with the comfort of having one-on-one learning in small classes.

**What student support resource do you use most?**  
I like the Learning Resource Center for academic tutoring.

**Where is your favorite place to study?** The Learning Resource Center!

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** It's the best educational decision you will make toward your future endeavors.

**How has SPC helped you work toward your goals?**  
I've built strong leadership and interpersonal skills at SPC.



## ATHENA GROOMS

**Age:** 62

**Major:** Business Management and Leadership

**Expected date of graduation:**  
May 2018

**Goals:** To help others with information as requested like being a consultant | To own my business in social services as a resource with free clothing, food and assisting elderly

**Clubs/Activities:** Student Government Association | Women on the Way | Top Class Ladies | SPC Volunteer

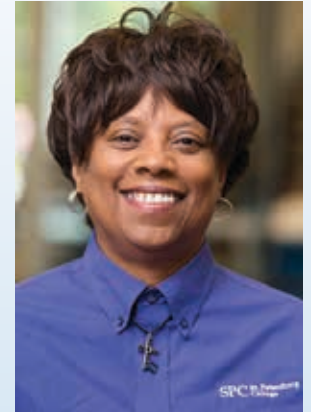
**Why SPC?**  
To complete my associate degree and now Bachelor of Science degree

**What student support resource do you use most?**  
Tutoring lab and writing studio

**Where is your favorite place to study?** St. Pete/Gibbs Campus study room, Midtown Center study room and Student Life and Leadership room

**What advice would you give someone thinking of coming to SPC?** It is a friendly and helpful environment with experienced staff to help you to succeed with your education. Everything you need can be found right here at St. Petersburg College. Stay focused and utilize free resources

**How has SPC helped you work towards your goals?**  
Scholarships, textbook lending, Baycare free support and out-of-class support.



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# WOMEN ON THE WAY: A LEGACY OF "POWER, PASSION AND PURPOSE"

## FIVE CAMPUSES NOW HAVE WOW CENTERS THAT PROVIDE RESOURCES FOR WOMEN STRIVING TO SUCCEED IN COLLEGE.

**W**hen the latest Women on the Way Center was dedicated at the Tarpon Springs Campus this spring, it became the college's fifth center dedicated to helping women achieve their goals.

During the reception, Maria Nieves Edmonds, who passed away in January 2017, was honored as a founding force behind the movement to support women in their educational journeys.

In a poignant moment, Edmonds' daughter Leza Ries shared a letter written by her mother in 1981, when the first center opened.

"My only wish is that I will be able to leave my grandchildren a legacy of pleasant memories of love and understanding, so, like my own grandmother, I will never die," Edmonds said in the letter.

In its first year, WOW served about 15 women. In 2016-17, it served more than 300. Over the last 36 years, it has impacted thousands of students.



## RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

WOW was originally launched to support women who were entering college and the workforce in larger numbers than ever before. The goal was to provide them – many the first in their families to attend college – with the skills and resources to be successful in an academic setting.

The effort was spearheaded by Dr. Vilma Zalupski, SPC's first female Provost; Bobbie Hinson, Career Center Director; and Edmonds, a psychology instructor who later became an Associate Provost and WOW's first coordinator.

WOW provides students with scholarship assistance and workshops and seminars on topics such as time management, parenting and success strategies. The organization also offers a textbook lending library and additional resources and referrals for social services.

WOW students are eligible for scholarships administered by the St. Petersburg College Foundation and a boutique with clothing, toiletries and small household items.

In 2005, WOW was named a finalist for the Governor's Peace at Home Award for its efforts to help female victims of domestic violence achieve success in their lives.

## SUPPORT FOR SUCCESS

WOW Coordinator Shirley Crumbley said the unique program is like a "sisterhood."

"This program not only assists students with resources, but for many, it's their only support system," said Crumbley. "They feel a sense of belonging that someone cares about their academics and livelihood."

Student Catherine Cervantes, a single mother of two children, said WOW provides her with the support she needs to balance college and life.

"The program and its sponsors have helped me with books and scholarships – there's just a lot of opportunity through Women on the Way," she said.

Student Paula Thomas remembers being afraid to return to college as an older student in a new state.

"My support at SPC has been God, my family and WOW," said Thomas. "Now, I'm a woman of power, passion and purpose."

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“I don't think I would have gotten this far or done so well if not for the folks at SPC.”



Brittany Achor

# SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

**W**hen Brittany Achor left a troubled family life behind and enlisted in the Air Force, she couldn't have known the unique way she would serve her country.

As an Airman First Class, Achor loved her work with computer networking cryptographic systems and planned on a long career in the military. But during her first year, she was injured during a training exercise and later received an honorable discharge.

Achor enrolled at St. Petersburg College, where she found a new passion: serving veterans.

During her first term, she connected with the Student Veterans Association (SVA) during a Clearwater Campus quad event. She jumped right into a leadership role as vice president during her first year. This year she served as the group's president.

"They kept me grounded and motivated," she said. "I wasn't really sure what SVA was all about. All I knew was that I was around family all of a sudden. For me, that was profound."

## A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PATRIOTISM

At the start of her second year, Achor led 122 new American citizens from 32 countries in their first Pledge of Allegiance during their Naturalization Ceremony.

"I work with veterans who fought for our freedom and understand the value of our liberties," said Achor. "I get to watch people go through a life-changing process and then enjoy the same liberties we value. It's a beautiful thing."



2016 Naturalization Ceremony

## CONNECTIONS THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE

Earlier this year, Achor went to the national SVA conference with 2,000 other student veterans. She connected with hiring managers from prestigious employers of veterans like Disney, Raytheon, Google, Accenture, General Dynamics and more.

"I was blown away," she said. "That conference kept me in high gear for the rest of the year. It turned my college degree into something bigger than me, and that has made all the difference."

## ENGAGED IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

Achor has worked with other SVA members to organize events like the annual Veterans Appreciation Awards Banquet, where she was given the Veteran Scholar and Exceptional Veteran Character awards. The group also volunteers in the community to distribute care packages to 911 first responders, supports the Narrows Nature Center at George C. McGough Nature Park in Largo and helps out at the Veterans Art Center of Tampa Bay.

"Brittany is a fine example of servant leadership, putting her heart and soul into every task she completes," said Student Life and Leadership Coordinator Stephanie Henningsen. "Through her efforts, we had one of our best Veterans' Day events in years and raised funds for the local SVA chapter. She is a credit to our campus, college and country."

Achor's commitment resulted in a number of awards and scholarships, including the 2016 Veteran Scholar of the Year and 2017 Veteran of the Year awards.

"Brittany is a selfless and loyal individual," said Joe Benavides, Faculty Advisor for the Clearwater Campus Student Veterans Association. "Her dedication to the Veterans in our community showcases her character: a compassionate and determined leader."

This summer, Achor graduated with an associate degree. This fall, she will start at the University of South Florida's College of Engineering, where she will focus on renewable energy and sustainability.

She attributes a lot of her success to the support of SPC faculty and staff.

"I don't think I would have gotten this far or done so well if not for the folks at SPC," she said. "They have all been so supportive and pushed me to succeed."

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# SPC FOUNDATION SPOTLIGHT

## BAY AREA MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

The Bay Area Manufacturers Association established a scholarship with the SPC Foundation in 2016. The scholarship benefits SPC students majoring in one of the college's Engineering Technology programs, giving special preference to veterans. Each year, two \$1,500 scholarships are awarded.

“Part of BAMA's mission is to support STEM education. One of the best ways for us to complete our mission is by helping local colleges and educational facilities with scholarships to the students who will ultimately support and contribute to manufacturing in Tampa Bay. Our membership is very concerned about keeping jobs local. Without supporting those who will be our future workforce, the possibilities of growing manufacturing in Tampa Bay (and Florida and the United States) declines.”

– **Becky Jo Burton, Executive Director of Bay Area Manufacturers Association**



The St. Petersburg College Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Led by a prominent Board of Directors who represent a diverse mix of professional, business and civic leadership, the Foundation maintains a laser-like focus on advancing the work of St. Petersburg College. To this end, the Foundation has cultivated an environment of collaboration and support among a broad constituency of stakeholders and developed a range of educational initiatives to provide opportunities for all segments of the community to invest in the success of our students.

To learn more about the Foundation or to make a donation, please call (727) 341-3302 or visit [spcollegefoundation.spcollege.edu](http://spcollegefoundation.spcollege.edu).

**Thank you to our generous donors!**

## DR. ROSEMARY KELLER

Earlier this year, Dr. Rosemary Keller established an endowed scholarship at the SPC Foundation to benefit students pursuing an Associate in Science in Nursing degree. The scholarship will be awarded annually and will help underwrite the cost of tuition, fees and books.



“‘Job well done’ was one of my favorite comments when my students were successful on an exam or special project or when they provided excellent care for their patient in the clinical setting. These are only some of the reasons I enjoyed my job as a Nursing Instructor for 14 years in the Associate of Nursing Degree program at the SPC College of Nursing. Having worked closely with many students, I was very aware of the hardships and sacrifices many of them had to make to achieve the professional goals set forth by the college. Their total dedication and commitment to obtaining the knowledge and skills to be a safe, competent and compassionate nurse was admirable. Their success in becoming the best nurses they could be was the source of my passion for teaching. Knowing that many students depended on scholarships to help them achieve their goals was the reason I decided to establish an endowed scholarship for SPC nursing students so other students can have some assistance in making their dream a reality. It has been a privilege to have worked for SPC and played a role in preparing some of our best and brightest students to become outstanding nurses of tomorrow.”

– **Dr. Rosemary Keller, Former SPC Nursing Professor**

# CONNECTING WITH THE

## SPC'S LONG HISTORY OF SERVICE THROUGHOUT THE TAMPA BAY AREA EXPANDS THROUGH THE NEW CENTER FOR CIVIC LEARNING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

**O**n a balmy spring morning, volunteers gathered at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Clearwater to fill bags with donated fresh produce. Squash, tomatoes, zucchini and more were loaded into bags and given out to needy families who began lining up long before the scheduled 9:30 a.m. start time. Several St. Petersburg College volunteers filled bags, broke down boxes and toted large stacks of cardboard to be recycled. This event is just one of many opportunities that St. Petersburg College's Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement provides for SPC students, faculty and staff to carry on the long tradition of connection between SPC and the community.



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## THE CENTER'S ORIGIN

The Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement was born in 2015 after a series of efforts on the part of St. Petersburg College Professor Tara Newsom to engage students in the college and their communities. Newsom started offering extra credit to her American Government students for attending events on campus or volunteering. A slow start inspired her to up the incentive, so she piloted a program at the Downtown and Midtown centers offering a Leadership Certificate to students who completed

volunteer hours, attended seminars and on-campus events.

As Newsom embedded service learning into her classroom, student success rates climbed, motivating her to create a proposal to replicate the model across the entire college.

"It was then that I learned that service learning has actually been a hallmark of SPC since the origin of the college," said Newsom, Center Director. "Our programs use their courses to meet the

# COMMUNITY



community needs. This becomes a bridge from the community back into the college."

During the first year of the center, faculty leaders were developed on each campus to cultivate a culture of civic engagement. Now in its second year, the center is a place for data collection and coordination, and also a place where faculty can get the tools they need to coordinate and use service learning in all of their classes and bring service learning as a teaching pedagogy to the college.

## COLLEGE ENGAGEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

Newsom credits her colleagues' innovation with the center's early success. Math students volunteer with Pinellas County Schools (PCS) to tutor struggling learners. Volunteers from all over SPC take time out to mentor PCS students, volunteer at the St. Petersburg Free Clinic, and offer assistance alongside mental health professionals at Safe Harbor. There are also connections to food banks and Habitat for Humanity. Newsom says St. Petersburg College doesn't just work with the community - SPC is the community.

"Community colleges are designed to allow people who couldn't get to a state university to get an education at home. So we're doing work in the community and our graduates are doing service in the community. Wherever I go, there are SPC alumni, whether I'm at a city council meeting or at the doctor's office. We are the essence of what a community college is supposed to be."

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The college is seeking a Carnegie classification for the center, the gold standard for colleges and universities for civic engagement.

As part of SPC's expanded service mission, the college's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) is also launching a new civic leadership and civic engagement award that will be given to a faculty member who has impacted the community with sustainable service.

"Usually service leaders are a humble group, and this is a way to spotlight their efforts and encourage other faculty to do the same thing. We want to show our faculty that this is another way you can engage students," said CETL Director Heather Roberson.

A long-term goal is to have service learning classes in each of the college's academic program areas so all students gain exposure to citizenship and leadership. College interns are now working on community needs assessments to help connect organizations to faculty members who can build service into their coursework. The next iteration of the center, Newsom said, is a systemic approach to community issues.

## WHO'S HELPING WHO?

Studies show that students who are engaged beyond the classroom are more likely to be successful and that volunteering is good for the body and the mind.

"Service learning makes a student, who is perhaps the first in their family to go to college, feel like they have meaning. That they can give to others," Newsom said. "That sense of giving is powerful and makes them feel that they have something to give to the world."

Sophomore Hannah Tinsley attended the food distribution event to fulfill the six hours of community service that Newsom requires of her government students.

"The sight of people getting food that they needed was great," Tinsley said. "SPC is awesome because it's smaller than a big university, and it's easier to get involved and not be intimidated by

that. After I fulfill my required hours, I'll definitely do more. I want to do tutoring at an elementary school."

Many students who learn service at SPC came from the very neighborhoods where they are given the opportunity to take a leadership role in their community.

"They become turned on to the world and develop empathy and an understanding of their community. You've got to have those things to understand where other people are coming from and problem solve and get critical thinking skills underway," Newsom said.

Freshman Brandy Matthews finished her morning of filling food bags at Mt. Carmel feeling a little tired, hot - and fulfilled.

"I feel better about myself for doing this," she said. "Giving back really feels good."

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“ Music is important to the development of children. Studies show music increases test scores, math and social development... What’s interesting is 10-15 years down the road these kids will contribute to the fabric of music. ”

- David Cox, Executive Director,  
Gasparilla Music Foundation

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# A HARMONIOUS PARTNERSHIP

This past school year, St. Petersburg College partnered with the Gasparilla Music Foundation's Recycled Tunes program to support music education by collecting used instruments to donate to local schools. This partnership created an ecosystem of new opportunities for SPC and Pinellas County students. Six SPC campuses served as drop-off points where community members could donate gently-used instruments. Recycled Tunes collected the instruments to be refurbished before giving them back to Pinellas and Hillsborough County schools. More than 90 instruments were collected and given to classrooms in need. During the drive, Lealman Innovation Academy visited the St. Petersburg/Gibbs Campus for a drumline clinic with Humanities and Fine Arts Chair Patrick Hernly and to tour the Music Industry Recording Arts (MIRA) program. During their visit, the students were surprised with donated instruments. As part of the partnership, SPC's MIRA students gained valuable hands-on experience as they participated in the 2017 Gasparilla Music Festival.



“ Music is special and the ability to watch someone find something they love is unique. The students that use these instruments will benefit greatly. ”

- Gage Martin, Junior Band Member at Boca Ciega High School



# SPC St. Petersburg College

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A photograph of two graduates in blue caps and gowns. The male graduate on the left is wearing glasses and has a yellow and white stole. The female graduate on the right is holding a white diploma. They are both looking towards the right of the frame.

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