

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Alumni

# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2013



**SUSAN TEAGUE '71**  
Associate of Arts

## Director's Welcome



In the Fall of 2010 when Kalamazoo Valley's Alumni+ matured from an idea into reality, the work began to create a network or an avenue for sustained re-connection with former Kalamazoo Valley students and this institution.

In attempting to decide what it really was we were trying to achieve, committees were formed to assist in the process. These committees were a blend of faculty, staff, administrators and former students, all with different perspectives. It was then that a decision was made to include as alumni, not only degreed students with a one-year certificate or a two-year degree but an alumni can also be a former member, employee, contributor, or a student who attended Kalamazoo Valley and never finished. Alumni+ became reality.

So who are you? Are you alumni, alumna, alumnae, or alumnus, that's the question for today? According to Webster, the etymology of the word—the Latin noun *alumnus*—means “foster son, pupil” and is derived from the word “alere,” meaning to nourish.

So, here you go, see who you are and know who others are. Become and continue as an active member and enjoy the benefits of Kalamazoo Valley's Alumni+. Thank you for helping us grow and for your continued loyalty to Kalamazoo Valley.

Send your stories, comments and questions to Karen Visser at [kvisser@kvcc.edu](mailto:kvisser@kvcc.edu) or [alumni@kvcc.edu](mailto:alumni@kvcc.edu)

Steve Doherty  
Director of Development

## ALUMNI+ Newsletter

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## Alumni+ Calendar of Events

**Tuesday, September 3, 10 am–6 pm**  
**COUGAR CONNECTION**  
Student Commons, Texas Township Campus  
Texas Township Campus

## New Award Bestows Honor

After three years of planning and execution of significant initiatives and alumni opportunities, Kalamazoo Valley Community College awarded the inaugural Distinguished Alumni Award during the April commencement ceremony held on the campus of Western Michigan University.

The nomination process, established by the Kalamazoo Valley Alumni Relations Advisory Committee, began in early 2013. Recommendations were accepted by the committee from faculty and administration and included detail and documentation of contributions made by the nominee to the greater community. The criteria used in selection were:

1. The nominee shall be a graduate of Kalamazoo Valley with a designation of associate degree, certificate, or certificate of completion earned no less than three years ago.
2. The nominee shall be recognized for distinction in his/her field.
3. The nominee shall have demonstrated service/contributions to the greater community.

Following the adopted procedure the recommendation of the Committee was passed on to the College's president who made the final selection.

Alumni+ Newsletter is published three times each year: fall, winter and summer.

Questions about Kalamazoo Valley Alumni+ or this publication may be directed to the Alumni Relations Coordinator at: **269.488.4314** or at [alumni@kvcc.edu](mailto:alumni@kvcc.edu)

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## College Updates

More updates available at [www.kvcc.edu/news](http://www.kvcc.edu/news) and at [f /KVCCAlumni](https://www.facebook.com/KVCCAlumni)

### HLC ANNOUNCEMENT

Working with partners Bronson Healthcare Group and Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Kalamazoo Valley Community College is planning a new campus focused on community wellness and food sustainability. The goal is to provide students and the community with education and training opportunities for existing and new jobs and to position Kalamazoo as a sustainable food leader.

The curriculum will address urban farming, composting, recycling, energy-conservation, and cooking with locally-grown and organic ingredients. The focus will be ecologically and environmentally sensitive while addressing the pressing challenges of diabetes, childhood and adult obesity, pre/post-cancer related dietetic needs, and mental health therapy.

A major goal is to minimize negative impact on the environment while bringing healthy, tasty, locally-grown foods to schools, hospitals, nursing homes, private homes, and restaurants.

### ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

Mike Collins, Vice President for College and Student Relations, has been appointed Executive Vice President for Instructional and Student Support Services. In addition, Dennis Bertch, Academic Dean, has been promoted to the role of Vice President for Academic Services.

Collins and Bertch have been charged with reviewing and improving the college's academic and student support services to help ensure maximum student success. It is expected that a more fully-integrated approach will enhance students' academic experiences by providing a more streamlined approach to campus-wide services.



## TAKING A GREAT SMILE GLOBAL

A degree in dental hygiene from KVCC has not only served Nancy Loney well, it has also given her an opportunity to treat patients while serving her country across the globe. And she has always done it with a smile.

"Little did I know when I was 18 years old and choosing my career, it would become one of the best decisions I ever made," says Nancy.

Following graduation in 1984, she married a career Army officer. They started a family and lived in Colorado, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Italy, and Germany. The dental hygiene career was flexible and Nancy was able to raise three children, manage 12 moves and still weave in work and volunteer time. A little strength and courage also helped.

Nancy obtained licensure in five states. With every move came an opportunity to learn new techniques and procedures "Many times I have volunteered with the Red Cross as a hygienist treating soldiers," she said. She also worked in dental clinics for the Department of Defense in Georgia and Germany.

The years have provided very few dull moments. The next is a move to Seoul, Korea where husband Tim will be doing Civil-Military Operations. There, Nancy again plans to volunteer with the Red Cross and work for the Department of Defense Dental Clinic to stay current with her skills.

"We are really looking forward to the new adventure," she says. But this time will be different. The Loneys have passed on that helpful and adventurous spirit to their children. Son Timothy is attending college at West Point and daughter Megan is pursuing a master's in peace operations and will spend the summer in New York City working for the United Nations. Son Nicholas is in 3rd grade and will attend Department of Defense School in Seoul.

The Loneys have not been short on blessings, but they will be the first to tell you that they are always motivated to give back. "One day soon my husband will retire and I hope to work with Operation Smile, a non-profit that helps heal and transform childrens' smiles," says Nancy. The organization treats children suffering from cleft palate or other facial deformities.

Thankfully, Nancy has received the training and experience she needs to help make that happen.



# ART AND TEACHING GO HAND IN HAND

Some say that art imitates life. Susan Teague's story is no exception. When she left Kalamazoo Valley in 1971 with an associate's degree, she never dreamed that she would return to the same place nearly 30 years later to be an art instructor.

"The place has not lost its intimacy," Teague, who teaches watercolor painting at the Center for New Media, says about Valley. "It has gotten huge, but keeping up with technology hasn't made it cold or sour. It is an energetic, vibrant place."

Teague immediately felt a connection in 1969 when she first toured the campus before graduating from high school. "My mind was made up," she recalls. "This small campus, in its second year with less than 500 students, generated the warmth and care of a family. I was thrilled to be a student."

She moved on to finish her bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from Western Michigan University. By the time she graduated, she was married with two small children. "The challenges and demands I encountered being a full time art student, working part-time and being a wife, homemaker and mother were extremely difficult," says Teague. "It was a delicate balance that can be learned only by trial and error, but it can be done with caring support. I am so grateful for my initial years at Kalamazoo Valley because its encouraging,

empowering atmosphere anchored unshattering confidence in me." It was during those early years that she learned she could succeed at anything, academically or otherwise.

However, the rigors of taking five art studio classes per semester at WMU in order to keep her scholarship left Teague depleted. She did not touch an art project for five years.

This hiatus gave birth to a new form of art—and a move to Kentucky for her husband to finish a master's degree. "I discovered my natural ability as a stage performer when I participated in Kentucky State forensic finals in theatre," says Teague. Teague won first in the division of oral interpretation, motivating her to pursue a master's in creative expression at Murray State.

During that time she also gave birth to her third son. "I have been working as an artist and teacher of art ever since," says Teague. "Art and teaching go hand in hand for me."

Five years later, the family moved back to Michigan. Teague's love and desire to create art was rekindled when she was asked to illustrate a book.

Her work became more and more well known. She has painted murals at Murray State University and Paw Paw Public Schools; exhibited at more than 100 local, regional, and state art exhibitions; illustrated and designed six published books; and her art works have been in published books and magazines such as Oxford Press, Red Cross, and Diocese of Kalamazoo. Teague also continued to combine her love of art and teaching at the Kendall School of Art and the Kalamazoo Art Institute.

In 2000, she was commissioned to paint a 4000-square-foot mural in the children's hospital at Bronson. The mural was to be a huge feature in the hospital's new unit. She started painting in September with a deadline of five weeks. Part way through, she fell ill with a stomach virus. She was sick for nearly a week, and that's when she found a lump in her abdomen. Tests confirmed that it was ovarian cancer. Surgery followed on October 25, then chemo.

"It was a very aggressive cancer and had doubled in size every day. They removed a tumor the size of a football," she says.

Teague was allergic to most of the medicine used to treat her illness. A blood clot formed near her neck and a doctor gave her a 10% chance of survival. Adjustments in medicine and some alternative treatments gave her a fighting chance.

"I received seven blood transfusions, but it had been four months since I had touched the mural," she said. "They never assigned another artist, even though they wanted it finished by the time the new unit opened. I was determined to finish it."

So with an IV hooked up, she returned to Bronson to paint in March 2001. Many families that passed by stopped to talk to her. "They all had a story," says Teague. "It inspired me to give children paint brushes and add to the mural."

One patient who stands out in her mind was a teenager with an eating disorder.

"There we were, two underweight girls hooked up to IV's for different reasons, painting together every day," she says, maintaining that she and the other patients helped her heal.

By June, the mural was finished.

"From there my path was brighter and clearer," she says. "So many things you don't see right away are later a gift."

Teague became inspired to speak about her experience and share her art across the country. She brought 26 of her pieces to Hawaii in 2004 for *Woman: Passion, Power, and Divinity*, which opened Women's History Month at a festival at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, Big Island. Here, she developed a series of humorous works titled 'Unorthodox Saints.' Seven of these were exhibited at ArtPrize 2010 in Grand Rapids and



A large mural in the Children's Hospital at Bronson.



Susan Teague helps a student in her class at the Center for New Media.

a series of four was purchased by Ripley's Believe It or Not Enterprise museum in Orlando.

Shortly after the event concluded, a new life challenge occurred.

Teague was riding her bike when she was hit by a car.

"I had damage to my neck and ribs," she says. "While it has been three years, I am pleased in the recovery process."

Teague was again drawn to Kalamazoo Valley—this time to use the health facilities. Pilates and swimming are part of her ongoing therapy.

"While I was there, it became clear to me," she said. "Teaching art can help with the healing process. And what better place to do it?"

Summer 1 semester marked her first class teaching at Valley. "I love everything about teaching here. I have such a varied group," she says. "All levels of talent are there—from beginners to people with MFA's. The first thing I told them was, 'In this class there are no "bad dogs." Leave criticism, doubt, fear, and comparing yourself to others outside the door to this classroom. We are here to grow, enjoy, learn, and honor our own creativity.'"

"Healing from cancer taught me that the greater light points out who we really are. I use the same thought process while teaching art," she says. For Teague, this feels like being home.

## Profile in Excellence



## CATCHING UP WITH ERICK MARTIN

Kalamazoo Valley welding instructor Erick Martin works hard to dispel the myth that there are no good jobs in the skilled trades. “For years and years, people were told not to go into the skilled trades,” said Martin, who has taught at the college for 17 years. “Now all of a sudden we’re the saving grace of the economy.”

Martin, a Coloma native and Ferris State University graduate, jumped at the chance to teach at Kalamazoo Valley. “I really wanted to teach at the college level,” he said. The former high school teacher enjoys his students’ uniqueness. “My students represent a wide range of ages and backgrounds. They are a thoroughly diverse group.”

Only a handful of women take welding courses at Kalamazoo Valley each year. “Being a woman in welding is unique,” Martin said. “You can’t be afraid of being out of place.” Martin’s student, Sarah Inderlied, completed Welding 190 and continues to work on her associate degree in welding while working fulltime as a welder. “It’s definitely fun and fulfilling,” she said. “Erick Martin is awesome. You can tell he loves teaching so much and he wants to see people succeed. He uses every moment to teach.”

Martin is confident that his students leave the lab well prepared and he knows welding can open many doors. “Our skill set is broad so for the rest of your career, you have options,” he said.



Sarah Inderlied struggled to stay motivated in high school, but that changed when she discovered welding at the Tech Ed Center in Allegan. After graduation in 2009, she continued her studies at Kalamazoo Valley. Today, the 22-year-old is working full-time as a welder at outdoor furniture maker Landscape Forms.

“I can definitely see myself doing this for a long time,” Inderlied said. Before landing her job, she earned a certificate of completion in Welding 190, taught by Erick Martin. The 10-credit hour rapid welding skills course quickly equips welders with entry level skills. Inderlied continues to work on an associate degree in welding. Her skills improve daily through on-the-job experience. Inderlied said her high school years were a constant struggle. “I was a wreck, but I got to the point where I just wanted more for myself.” A six-month stay in the Mercy Ministries program helped her deal with issues related to her dad’s addiction and alcoholism. “It helped me out a ton,” she said. “It really changed my life. There’s a night and day difference and I am so thankful.”

She’s also thankful to have discovered welding. “It’s like nothing I had run across before. It really sparked my interest. It’s empowering to be one of the only women in the class and to know that I’m just as good as the guys. It definitely gives me a sense of accomplishment.”

# ALUMNI+ EVENTS PHOTO RECAP

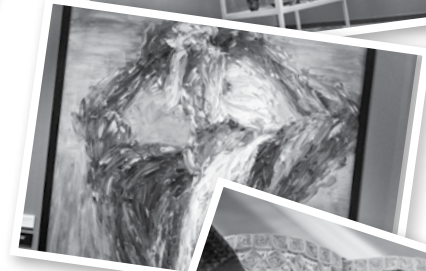


## Alumni+ Art Show

The annual Alumni+ Art Show has become a popular attraction that enables the college to celebrate its alumni artists.

## Dental Reunion

The first ever Dental Hygiene Reunion was a huge success.



## Spring 2013 Commencement

Kalamazoo Valley's newest alumni were welcomed to the club on April 28.



## Kalamazoo Valley Alumni Distinguishes Himself

Jeffrey Melvin never saw himself as a distinguished alumnus, as a matter of fact "distinguished" was the farthest thing from his humble mind when he enrolled in Kalamazoo Valley's first class. Raised as a farm boy in Bloomingdale, Melvin, now principal of Bangor High School, gives back to his community in many ways. Concerned about each of the Bangor students, Jeff provides good council and advice whenever he can, hoping to set by example and encouragement through both his personal and professional life.

Speaking at the Kalamazoo Valley April 28 Commencement, Melvin stressed the importance of providing students with challenging curriculum and real-life opportunities. He passionately appealed to the audience to be encouraging, going the extra mile, reaching out to others, being present, building relationships, and providing

young people multiple chances to succeed, including the benefits of a college education with Kalamazoo Valley being a favorite choice of his.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College is proud of its first-ever Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient, Jeffrey Melvin.

## Special Announcements



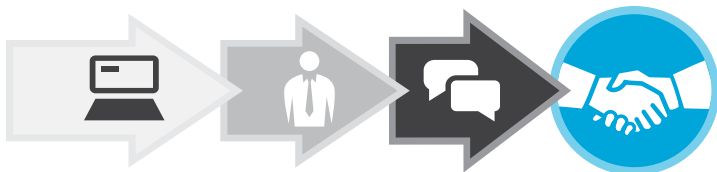
### Veterans Tribute Garden

Corporate sponsors are being sought to help underwrite the costs associated with the construction of a Veterans Tribute Garden at Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Texas Township Campus. The garden will include bricks inscribed with the names of servicemen and women and corporate donors.

For more information or to donate to the garden, contact Elizabeth Lyons at [alyons@kvcc.edu](mailto:alyons@kvcc.edu), 269.488.4873, or go to [www.kvcc.edu/tribute](http://www.kvcc.edu/tribute).

**Volunteer Tutors Needed!** Kalamazoo Valley Community College and the Kalamazoo Adult Literacy program have joined hands to offer Kalamazoo Valley students tutoring assistance in reading and writing. Tutor training will be provided. This is an excellent way to give back to others, to build your skills and add another significant attribute to your own resume. Interested alumni should email [alumni@kvcc.edu](mailto:alumni@kvcc.edu).

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## KALAMAZOO LITERACY COUNCIL **NEEDS TUTORS**

A staggering 13% of Kalamazoo's adult population—31,000 adults—are functionally illiterate. Join the project, become a tutor and change someone's life, and yours, for the better.

Every time someone becomes a tutor for the KLC, Kalamazoo County gets closer to becoming 100 percent literate.

So, let's get started. Take a look at the Tutor Orientation schedule and find a time that's convenient for you. It's the first and most important step in your commitment to making Kalamazoo a better place, now and in the future.

Located at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

For details go to [kalamazooliteracy.org](http://kalamazooliteracy.org) or email [alumni@kvcc.edu](mailto:alumni@kvcc.edu).

