



# SCHOLARSHIP SPECIAL EDITION CONNECTION

Summer 2014

## Record-Setting Gift: Frisco couple donates \$2 million for scholarships

She is livid when she sees plastic bags fluttering in the breeze like kites. He worries about the long-term toll of pollution on the ecosystem. Together they are caretakers who resolve to protect the land and its people.

The fertile soil Roger Lawler cultivated in North Texas gave him the freedom to help others lead richer lives, and this spring he and his wife Jody made a record-setting \$2 million gift to the Collin College Foundation to establish endowed scholarships. The donation is the largest from an individual family in the history of Collin College, and in recognition of the gift, the college has named a building at the Preston Ridge Campus in Frisco as "Lawler Hall."

However, that is not why Roger Lawler made this gift. He made it because he thought it was the right thing to do. "This is the easiest way to help the most kids," he said. Jody said her husband is not a person who wants recognition, but no one can deny that he deserves it. "He knows how important it is to support local education, and he knows it will make a difference," she said.

The chair of the college's Board of Trustees, Mac Hendricks, said the Lawler gift demonstrates a commitment to the future of Collin County, its residents and its students. "Thanks to Roger and Jody's generosity, we are able to provide the gift of education to students who otherwise would not be able to afford collegiate education," he said.



Roger Lawler (right) and his wife Jody visited Lawler Hall, named in honor of their \$2 million gift to scholarships at Collin College.

### Farm Heritage

Roger Lawler has never been a man who let life happen without purpose. Born in a farmhouse near Ben Wheeler, Texas, he learned the value of hard work from a very young age. "I'm from a long line of farmers. We would chop cotton for a dollar a day. Those were lean times," he said.

Although the times may have been meager, they anchored his life in a love for the land and an appreciation for the environment. It is a love that he shares with Jody today.

"There is something about black, fertile dirt that soothes your soul," she said. "I suppose if you are from the coast, you feel the same way about the ocean. If you are from anywhere around farmland, you have an appreciation for the soil," she said.

### Military and Higher Education

When Roger was 16, he fibbed about his age so he could enlist in the Navy during World War II. He was assigned to a submarine based at Pearl Harbor, and later the Navy sent him to electronics school where he learned to fix radios.

After an honorable discharge, he moved back to Texas and started college on the GI Bill at North Texas Agricultural College, which is now The University of Texas at Arlington. While in college, he found

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## Achieving Big: Two Collin College students win Academic All-USA

Collin College students Michelle Davis and Alexa Acosta are two vastly different individuals with notably similar stories of hardship, perseverance and triumph. However, April was a month dominated by triumph as both Davis and Acosta stepped into the national spotlight when Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) International Honor Society heralded them in Washington D.C. as members of the All-USA Academic Team.

The All-USA Academic Team is widely considered the most prestigious academic honor for community college students.

Among more than 1,700 students nationwide, only 20 were selected for this national honor

based on academic achievement, leadership and civic involvement.

"Michelle and Alexa are perfect examples of the academic excellence at Collin College," said Mac Hendricks, who chairs the Collin College Board of Trustees. "They are role models in the classroom, on campus and in the community, so we are delighted that they have been recognized."

The competition is sponsored by Follett Higher Education Group and presented by PTK, the American Association of Community Colleges and USA TODAY. Honorees receive \$2,500 scholarships and a distinguishing medallion for graduation.

Collin College District President Cary A. Israel said, "To our knowledge, this is the first time that Phi Theta Kappa has selected two students from one college district, and Alexa and

Michelle absolutely deserve it. They both maintained perfect 4.0 grade point averages while working their way through college and serving others. It was my pleasure to hand them their degrees in May when they officially joined the ranks of Collin College alumni."

The good news did not end with the All-USA announcement. PTK surprised Acosta with an additional \$5,000 scholarship for her selection as a Guistwhite Scholar. Davis also received an additional \$2,000 scholarship when she was named a Coca-Cola New Century Scholar as well as a \$1,000 scholarship as a David R. Pierce Scholar. PTK also selected Davis to represent the All-USA team in a story in *USA Today* and as a featured speaker for the Presidents' Brunch during the All-USA festivities.



Alexa Acosta and Michelle Davis were named to the All-USA Academic Team

Both women serve as Collin College student organization leaders and actively volunteer in the community. They attribute their success to the partnership of hard work and support from the

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[www.collin.edu/connection](http://www.collin.edu/connection)

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# Where are they NOW?

## Alumna educates on more than academics

### Success for Allison Claunch means boosting a child's confidence.

As a classroom teacher for nine years and now an instructional coach for Frisco Independent School District, the same district from which she graduated, Claunch strives to help her students recognize their individual talents and strengths.

"Students will always remember how their teachers made them feel," the Collin College graduate explained. "Every kid is successful at something."

Amidst a plethora of exceptional teachers, Claunch remembers one childhood teacher who made her feel incapable of success. Despite excelling overall, Claunch struggled with math. Her frustration was compounded by an authority figure who said it was solely a boys' subject.

She resolved to protect students from similar experiences and joined the ranks of educators.

Growing up in a single-parent home, she understood money was tight.

"My mom is a Collin College graduate as well," Claunch noted. "She started college when we were in elementary school."

When it was Allison's turn, "I knew college would be on my dime," she said. "I didn't want to graduate \$100,000 in debt, but I still wanted a good education."

Claunch completed two years at Collin College before transferring to a university. Scholarships through the Collin College Foundation combined with affordable tuition and a job enabled Claunch to say something very few can.

"I left college with no loans," Claunch said. "Scholarships made it so I never had to worry about what I would pay back."

Near the end of her bachelor's degree program, Claunch realized there was one thing standing in her way—college algebra. During the holiday break, she enrolled at Collin College for a compressed semester. She knocked out algebra with the help of great professor.

To her surprise, college algebra was the last course she needed to not only graduate with her bachelor's degree, but also her Associate of Arts degree. She received two degrees that December.

It was only fitting that she would spend the majority of the next decade teaching math and science to nine and 10 year olds.

"The fact that I'd struggled with it myself made me a better teacher," she emphasized. "Instead of getting frustrated when students didn't understand, it kept me thinking, 'How can I relay this?' or 'Can I say this differently?'"

Children who once hated math made huge strides.

"For me, it was about changing that mind set to 'I love math. I can't wait for math. I'm good at it!'" Claunch said.

While she valued building relationships with all her students, Claunch found she has a special place in her heart for children considered to have behavioral difficulties.

Whether it was a girl obsessed with technology or a boy who could not talk about anything but football, Claunch said she perpetually asked herself, "How can I reach them?"

Claunch found one student simply wanted to be acknowledged and understood, so she gave her a journal.

"I said, 'You can't talk or act like that in class, but if you're frustrated, write it down in here. Give it to me at the end of the day. I'll read it, and we can discuss it then,'" Claunch recalled. "Through that journal we formed a special bond."

In addition, the student improved her grades, confidence and relationships with teachers and peers.



**Allison Claunch**

Frisco ISD Instructional Coach  
Collin College Foundation Scholarship recipient

As an instructional coach now, Claunch misses the 20+ children she personally taught as a classroom teacher, but she recognizes the opportunity for a greater impact. She has the potential to work individually with all students in her school. Furthermore, she can focus on struggling students. Today, working in administration has become her long-term goal.

As this Collin College graduate's life and professional roles change, the fuel that drives her remains the same.

"If my students leave confident, knowing that I love them, and I'm behind them," Claunch said, "then I've done my job."

“ Scholarships made it so I never had to worry about what I would pay back. ”



# Founding trustee and community leader Tino Trujillo retires

After 30 years of dedicated service and leadership on the Collin College Board of Trustees, Tino Trujillo is retiring. Trujillo served as a trustee since the inception of the college as enrollment grew from 1,300 students at one campus to nearly 53,000 annually at seven sites.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we extend our utmost gratitude for Tino's tireless commitment to higher education and the community," said Mac Hendricks, chairman of the board. "Working alongside someone of Tino's character and integrity has been a privilege."

First elected to the college's founding Board of Trustees in 1985, Trujillo won a total of five elections, each for six-year terms. He was integral in the formation and governance of the college district and has served as a board officer as treasurer, secretary and vice chair of the board.

"Tino comes from a family of educators, and he has worked his entire life to advocate for education. Tino is one of the most selfless, compassionate human beings you could ever meet, and we are honored that he chose to give the college three decades of distinguished service," said Cary Israel, Collin College district president.

Fortino "Tino" Trujillo was born in Villa Victoria, Mexico as the 11th of 13 children. He attended the University of Mexico City majoring in economics and worked as a federal tax collector, industry inspector and economist for the government of Mexico before immigrating to United States in

1952. He served in the United States Army and eventually became a partner at his first restaurant in Glendale, Calif.

After moving to Texas, Trujillo contacted the Plano Chamber of Commerce about a location to set up a restaurant. Not too long afterward, one helpful chamber employee by the name of Janie Walker became his beloved wife and business partner. Trujillo opened his legendary restaurant Tino's Restaurant and Cantina in 1976 when the population of Plano was 43,000 compared to 272,000 today.

According to Dr. Bob Collins, who is a founding trustee like Trujillo, "My relationship with Tino goes back almost 40 years, and he has been a great leader for this college and the community. This will be the first time in the history of the college that I will look across the boardroom and not see Tino. It has been a great trip together, and we will miss him very much."

Trujillo has served on the board of directors for the Collin College Foundation, Plano Rotary Club, Plano Chamber of Commerce, American Cancer Society, Dallas Restaurant Association and Compass Bank of Dallas. His service also includes the Salvation Army of Collin County, Republican Men's Club of Plano, Craig Gilbert Foundation and

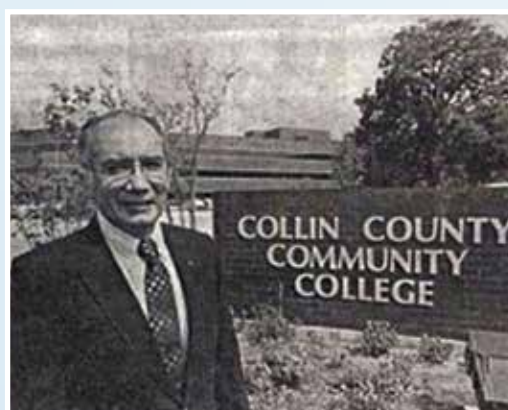


Tino Trujillo

Hendricks Academy of Honor, as well as the Plano Independent School District Advisory Committees for Foreign Language and Career Development. Trujillo also established the "Taste of Plano" food festival in 2001.

For his contributions to the community, he has been honored as Plano's Outstanding Citizen of the Year and Small Business Person of the Year as well as the U.S. Small Business Administration's Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year.

Trujillo jokes that he leveraged the popularity of his restaurants to get signatures for the petition to establish Collin College back in the mid-1980s. He explained that he would say to restaurant patrons, "Do you want this enchilada? Then sign this petition." No one knows if the tale is true or urban legend, and Trujillo will never tell. However, no one can ever doubt the impact he has had on the community.



Clockwise from left: Trujillo at the 1) opening of the Central Park Campus in January 1986, 2) swearing in of the first Board of Trustees, 3) dental hygiene class pinning, 4) signing of the resolution establishing the Collin Higher Education Center, 5) Collin College commencement and 6) presentation of scholarships during halftime of a Plano East football game during the college's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



# Third Collin College student in a row wins nation's largest private transfer scholarship



Moriah Walton  
Jack Kent Cooke Scholar

Moriah Walton dreams of writing the great American novel, but time is a luxury she simply cannot afford. The first in her family to attend college, Walton worked a myriad of jobs, ranging from babysitting and tutoring to mopping and waxing floors to afford her Collin College education. She could not fathom how she would ever afford the chance to attend a university, but her college professors had a plan. They nominated her for the largest private transfer scholarship for community college students in the nation. Walton was one of 85 college students in the United States awarded the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship.

Surrounded by college administrators and her loved ones, Walton shook with joy and nearly collapsed to the floor when she heard the news.

"I didn't think I could afford a university! This is perfect timing. I'm in such shock. This is such a dream," she said as tears of joy ran down her cheeks.

Walton paused, reflecting on her typical 50-60 hours of work, and said, "I just realized I won't have any debt," and her bewildered expression became a wide grin.

Judged by a panel of distinguished university faculty and admissions professionals, the scholarship is given to students who demonstrate academic ability and achievement, financial need, self-confidence, resilience and the desire to engage in and contribute to the world.

Walton will receive up to \$30,000 a year to complete a bachelor's degree. The scholarship helps students with tuition, living expenses, books and fees for the final two to three years of courses required for baccalaureate degrees. Walton hopes to transfer to Southern Methodist University (SMU) to pursue a degree in communication.

## Winging it

Earning an associate degree has been a bumpy ride with continual obstacles for Walton, a resident of Wylie. The oldest child of five, Walton's family lived from paycheck to paycheck. She did her part to

help. At seven, she had a hand in the care of her four younger siblings.

There were days when she simply could not afford the gas to drive to the college's Frisco campus, so she studied harder to keep her grades high enough to compensate for missed classes.

Surprisingly, her challenges never hindered her college involvement or volunteering. A Phi Theta Kappa international honor society member, Walton is currently the vice president of the Student Government Association, and she was elected to state office. She has also served as an orientation leader and student ambassador at the college.

Many professors helped Walton soar over hurdles. When an anonymous professor learned she could not afford the textbook, he and his wife purchased the book for her. When Professors of Communication Ceilidh Charleson-Jennings and Dr. Meredith Wang learned of her financial struggles, they helped her acquire scholarships from the Collin College Foundation. Walton says she could never have continued taking classes without the help of the foundation, professors Charleson-Jennings, Wang and Dr. Sam Tullock, professor of history; Eric Carlson, professor of communication; Shannon Kearns Simmons, theatre professor; Pam Sawyer, professor of developmental reading and Dr. Kerry Byrnes, professor of communication.

## The die is cast

Professors Wang and Carlson nominated Walton for the transfer scholarship and pressed her to apply.

"I knew I wasn't going to be able to transfer to a university. After fighting that long and hard, not being able to go on was just torture. I was so surprised when President Israel and Chairman Mac Hendricks announced that I won the scholarship. I went from worrying about where my next meal would come from to being over the moon," she said in shock.

It won't be long before this industrious woman crafts a plan to take her life to the next level, but for now she is reveling in a rare, elusive bequest—the gift of time. As unfathomable as it seems, soon she will have ample hours to study and set her pen to paper to begin the adventure of writing her very own book.

"Some have said that the old 'hard work and perseverance gets you anywhere' idea is wrong, but I received the largest transfer scholarship in the country. It is so humbling to be put in this category. I want to be an example for my siblings. I represent my family, friends, Collin College and my church. It's not dramatic to say this scholarship will completely change my life. I believe anyone can succeed, and I intend to prove it."

## THREE-PEAT:

Walton's win marks the third time in three years that a Collin College student has received the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. Last year, **Jennifer Buchan**, of Frisco, won the scholarship. A Collin College graduate, she plans to graduate with a degree in English from the University of North Texas in 2015. The previous year, **Cameron Woolley**, of Plano, won the scholarship. He is currently attending Southern Methodist University. He plans to earn degrees in economics and philosophy and intends to practice law.

## Record-Setting Gift continued from page 1

a job between classes at a little hamburger joint. "I worked part-time near campus for 50 cents an hour, and I was glad to get it."

Roger was at Southern Methodist University the summer that North Korea invaded South Korea. He joined the Marine Corps Reserves in August and soon was shipped overseas to the famed VMF 214 "Black Sheep Squadron" where he maintained radio equipment.

## Path of Progress

Following his military service, Roger worked for United Airlines and the agency that became NASA before returning to Dallas to begin a career as a builder and apartment building owner. He bought a farm in Frisco in the 1960s and built a very successful business in real estate and development.

His secret to success was to plan for the future and buy land

in the path of progress. Perhaps that is why education is near and dear to his heart. Roger said he is passionate about education because, "It gives you freedom. Education gives you the personal freedom to live where and how you wish."

According to Collin College District President Cary A. Israel, former trustee and community leader Sam Roach connected the Lawlers with the college. "The Lawlers have deep roots in North Texas, and we quickly discovered the depth of their commitment to education and the community," Israel said. "Collin College didn't exist when Roger went to college, but he understands this college's impact on the local economy."

## Investing in the Future

This endowed gift will fund dozens of scholarships for Collin College students each year, forever. "This gift never ends," Roger emphasized.



Pictured (left to right) are former Trustee Sam Roach, Roger Lawler, Foundation Chair Kim Moore, Jody Lawler and Chair of the Board of Trustees Mac Hendricks during a check presentation at the 2014 Stetson & Stiletto Standoff scholarship fundraiser.

Their gift never ends, but beginning this fall, there will be students on campus who can credit their college education to Roger and Jody Lawler. Their gift will support students majoring in science, biotechnology and studies relating to the environment or agriculture with scholarships to cover tuition, fees and books as well as laptop computers or other technology necessary for their coursework.

"Kids with education...they are the future of America, and I'm just helping a little bit," Roger said.

In his deep, booming voice, he quipped that someday people might ask, "Who was that guy, Lawler?"

He is a thoughtful caretaker, who along with his wife, planted seeds for the future right here in Collin County through scholarships at Collin College.

For more information about scholarships and gifts to support students, contact Amy Evans at the Collin College Foundation at **972.599.3144** or visit **www.collin.edu/foundation**.



# Leveling the LIVING Field: The need for scholarships

Some say there is no greater gift than freedom. However, while Americans live in the land of the free, many are not able to pursue their dreams because of a lack of funds.

## Balancing on a tight wire

Wendy George never thought it could happen to her. She was married with three children when the white picket fence surrounding her perfectly normal life splintered into two jagged spears: divorce and lack of child support. It was the beginning of a downward spiral. “Logically, it is hard for people to grasp. When you have a home and are going to the hardware store to buy something, you don’t think about the people in line at the food bank. Until you have something unexpected happen, like the loss of a job or having to take care of parents, you cannot truly understand the enormity of the problem,” George said.

George and her children lived paycheck to paycheck in a one-bedroom apartment. Unexpected expenses shifted her circumstances from bad to worse. When one child came down with strep throat, it wasn’t long before the other two were sick. The medical bills multiplied quickly. One summer, she didn’t have the money to pay her rent. Thankfully, she was able to temporarily relocate her family to the Samaritan Inn, Collin County’s homeless shelter.

“We followed strict rules and attended meetings at the Samaritan Inn. There are many people who truly need it. It is not a handout—it is a hand up,” she said.

George desperately wanted her girls to see that she could make it in college. Scholarships to attend Collin College were her saving grace.

George completed an associate degree from Collin College in June 2011 and transferred to Pepperdine University. She graduates with a degree in sociology and a minor in industrial and organizational psychology this year and plans to pursue a master’s degree in conflict resolution.

George says she could never have done this on her own.

“I would never have been accepted to Pepperdine if I didn’t receive scholarships at Collin. I would never have earned a degree at Collin College without the words of wisdom and assistance of Dr. Cheryl Wiltse (professor of English), Frank Mayhew (professor of history), Cheri Jack (associate dean of students at Preston Ridge Campus) and District President Cary Israel.”

**71 percent of students  
who graduated from  
four-year colleges in 2012  
had student loans.**

Former vice president of service in Collin’s Phi Theta Kappa honor society, George received one of 50 national Coca-Cola scholarships to continue her education at a university. She says she began giving back in Dr. Wiltse’s service learning class when she volunteered at Legal Aid of Northwest Texas. Soon she was volunteering for Meals on Wheels, Frisco Family Services, Girls on the Run, Clothe a Child, Volunteer Outreach in Civic Engagement and Earth Day events in Frisco and McKinney while she maintained a 3.96 grade point average.

According to George, scholarships create an amazing domino effect.

“People earn degrees, attain good jobs and the community improves. That is what community is all about. If you give back through scholarships, you allow individuals who are less fortunate to have the opportunity to succeed. These people could invent something and change the world. Giving back pulls the community together.”

## Falling through the cracks

George and her children are not the only ones who were struggling to make it. This academic year approximately 27,000 students applied for financial assistance via scholarships and financial aid at Collin College. However, only about 10,000 students received financial aid or scholarships. Students are in dire need of scholarships, and the community needs these individuals to fill thousands of upcoming job openings.

According to a report from Georgetown University Center, there will be 55 million job openings in the economy through 2020–24 million from newly created jobs and 31 million due to baby boom retirements.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, occupations with the largest employment growth through 2022 include health care professions, accounting and auditing, software development and management analysis.

## Dispelling scholarship myths

It is evident that the community needs the workers, and people want the education, so why can’t colleges just raise tuition and use that funding for scholarships? This is against the law. Tuition money from public colleges and universities cannot be used for scholarships. So how does Collin College provide scholarships to students? The foundation asks for donations from local heroes who understand the power of education. These include corporations, philanthropists, independent foundations, organizations and Collin College employees.

At Collin College, 100 percent of scholarship funds go directly to students, and the Board of Trustees continues to keep Collin College tuition the lowest in the state in an effort to make college affordable for everyone.

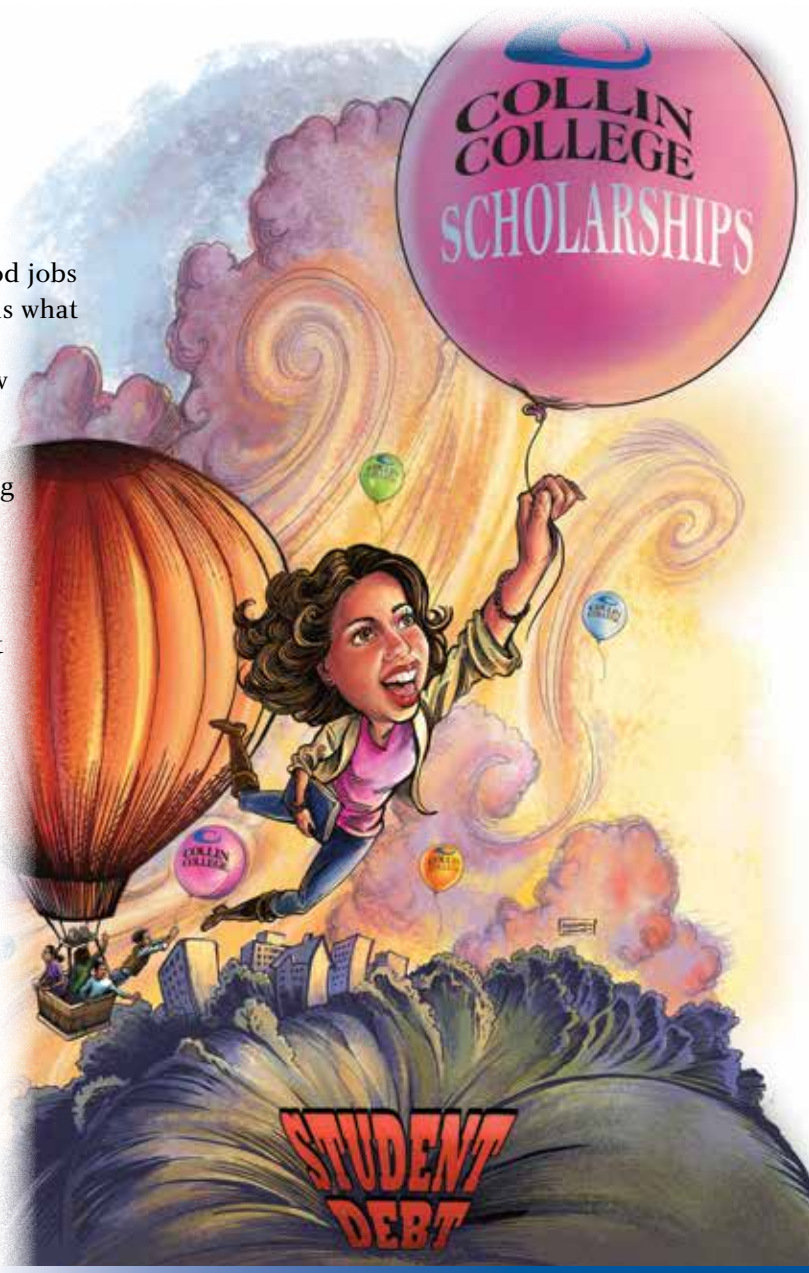
Why don’t students and their parents just take out more loans?

According to an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 71 percent of students who graduated from four-year colleges in 2012 had student loans, an average of \$29,400.

According to Cary A. Israel, district president of Collin College, debt is causing people to rethink going to college.

“There is only so much money a person can take out in loans. You can’t get a loan for retirement, so some parents are putting themselves in a precarious position by taking on large educational debt for their children. People have to put food on the table,” said Israel.

Israel understands the plight of students like George. The son of a World War II veteran, he grew up in a blue-collar family. He remembers his father working 15-hour days and his mother taking on countless part-time jobs. He and his twin brother were the first to attend college at the constant urging of their mother who wished they would escape a difficult life.



“Growing up we laughed a lot. We were a close family, but we had tremendous economic challenges,” he said.

Israel worked several jobs in college, including washing pots and pans. He spent his summers and breaks pouring concrete and painting dorm rooms. Though he received a national defense loan, he never knew if he would have enough funds to make it through another semester.

“Without loans and scholarships, there is no question; I would not have made it. I was holding three jobs and had to take out loans. Even small scholarships relieved the pressure in my head—I would have enough money to register for the next semester.”

Israel has never forgotten that anxiety, and he relentlessly looks for programs that will provide students with viable future jobs.

“It is amazing what our students do—balancing work and family and coming to college. Today, even with three jobs I couldn’t attend college on the money I received. You can’t pull yourself up by your bootstraps when you don’t have any shoes,” Israel said.

## Is education a right or a privilege?

Some might say that education straddles the fence between a right and a privilege. In the short term, people can survive without it, but in the long term they may struggle their entire lives.

According to Israel, there are few things that can catapult a person into a completely new economic situation and provide a novel perspective of life. Education has the power to do that.

“An education doesn’t guarantee that you will stay employed or be successful, but it does give you opportunities to succeed and opens doors to jobs because employers look at people with credentials first. An education is liberating. I am truly thankful for the people that give money for scholarships, but we have more to accomplish.”





# Two Collin College students win Academic All-USA continued from page 1

student-oriented faculty, staff and leadership at Collin College. Both say family is the primary motivation for their commitment to their academic goals.



## About Michelle Davis

Born in the United States as the daughter of two Brazilian immigrants, Davis was 18 months old when her parents returned to Brazil to be close to family. Portuguese was her first language, and she learned Spanish and English in high school. By age 10, she worked on the sales floor at a small retail shop.

Growing up, Davis, who now lives in Allen, remembers her parents' excitement at the prospect of her moving back to the U.S. "I struggled greatly to support myself financially while living in Brazil. Although it was hard to leave loved ones behind, America embraced me and gave me opportunities never attainable in Brazil."

Initially settling in Colorado, Davis spent several years working at a resort. Beginning at the front desk, she continued to earn promotions until she became a senior staff accountant. After she moved to Texas and got married, she had children, and suddenly her situation felt oddly familiar. Again, the bills outweighed her income.

"We decided to cut back on expenses, so I stayed home with the kids," Davis said. "I began to think, 'If I only had a degree, I could be making more money and help support my family financially.'"

She worked odd jobs here and there but felt a void.

"I wanted the personal satisfaction that comes from accomplishing something educationally," the aspiring tax attorney said. "I knew I had so much potential, and I felt by not pursuing it, I was not living up to my full potential."

That's when she decided to begin at Collin College. "Little did I know that decision was going to change my life," Davis laughed.

Fascinated by her first government course, Davis was certain she would enjoy a career in law. During her first fall semester, she joined the mock trial team, which advanced to nationals, and her budding talent won a number of awards. The next year, she was appointed as a student government senator. Finally, Davis became the next years' Phi Theta Kappa president.

Despite her busy schedule, Davis has never been willing to sacrifice being a good student or mother. She credits her husband, children and extended family for standing by her.

"The opportunities I have been given at Collin College, the dedication of my outstanding professors and advisors, and the unconditional love and support I received from my family and friends enabled me to succeed. My most sincere thanks to the college for changing my life and making me better," Davis emphasized.

"My kids—they're so proud. I have a 5-year-old who says, 'Mommy, I love seeing your awards on the shelf.' It's an opportunity for me to tell her, 'Honey, you can do this too if you dedicate yourself to something, and do it well.' I am overwhelmed with joy and gratitude," she said.



Alexa Acosta

## About Alexa Acosta

Acosta also appreciates the role of her family during her educational journey.

Born in Dallas, Acosta lived in Texas for 11 years before moving to Puerto Rico with her mother. Acosta returned to Texas following high school to be closer to her dad and sister who live in Plano.

Although she was accepted and offered partial funds at a number of universities, her father and sister stressed the value of Collin College.

"It turned out to be the best decision of my life," she said.

A gifted painter who spent six years at an arts magnet school, Acosta believes Collin College helped her identify her true goals.

"It has completely shaped and molded me," Acosta said. "You don't always know what you want coming out of high school. You think you do, but you don't. I've grown so much. My experiences here made me realize a passion for leadership and education, which changed my career path completely."

After leadership roles, such as the vice president of leadership for Phi Theta Kappa, in which she oversaw the development and implementation of leadership workshops and events, Acosta changed her major from fine arts to marketing and business. She plans to earn a bachelor's in marketing, a master's in higher education and a doctorate in leadership development. Her dream job would be traveling the country as an education-focused motivational speaker.

Acosta said, "Words cannot express my gratitude towards my family and friends who have supported me throughout my educational journey, and especially Collin College for providing me the opportunities to develop myself beyond my expectations."



## Award-winning Phi Theta Kappa Chapter

The Collin College chapter of Phi Theta Kappa international honor society is a five-star chapter with so many accolades that it has been ranked Top 3 in the world.

### INTERNATIONAL HONORS:

1. All-USA Academic Team: Michelle Davis & Alexa Acosta
2. Guistwhite Scholar: Alexa Acosta
3. Coca-Cola New Century Scholar: Michelle Davis
4. *USA Today* feature story: Michelle Davis
5. Keynote Speaker for College Presidents' Reception: Michelle Davis
6. Paragon Award for New Advisors: Dr. Jessica Hargis and Dr. Garry Evans
7. Distinguished College Administrator: Dr. Terry Hockenbrough
8. Distinguished Officer Team Award
9. Distinguished Chapter Member Award: Janice Hitchcock

### TEXAS REGIONAL HONORS:

1. All-Texas Academic Team: Alexa Acosta, Jasmine Beal and Michelle Davis
2. Five Star Chapter Award 10th consecutive year
3. Five Star Officer Team
4. Top Texas Chapter Award
5. Honors in Action Merit Award
6. College Project Merit Award
7. Horizon Advisor Award: Dr. Jessica Hargis & Dr. Garry Evans
8. Administrator Hall of Honor Award: Dr. Terry Hockenbrough
9. Friend of Texas Award: Daniel Bryner
10. Member Hall of Honor Award: Janice Hitchcock
11. Honors in Action and College Project Participation Award

Top Texas Chapter Award 2014



Phi Theta Kappa Distinguished Officer Team



# Student & Alumni HIGHLIGHTS

Collin College Student Government Association President **Joel Mason** was elected as the 2014-15 state president of the Texas Junior College Student Government Association, leading an organization representing 720,000 students throughout Texas. This notable achievement is the first state SGA presidency in the history of Collin College.



Joel Mason

The Medical Center of Plano recognized Collin College alumnae and former nursing students **Emily Romano** and **Tiffany Guzman** as “Shining Star” nurses for outstanding nursing.

Congressman Sam Johnson awarded Collin College student **John Wangler** the Congressional Veteran Commendation for the third district of Texas. Only 14 local individuals received the award this year.



John Wangler

Student **Bobby Arrington** and faculty sponsor **Tebring Daly** created an Android application for “Hope for the Silent Voices,” a nonprofit organization serving underprivileged children. Together, they contributed 605 service-learning hours.

Student **Chance Sharpsteen** received the Gold Award from Habitat for Humanity of South Collin County. Sharpsteen performed more than 1,500 hours of community service on behalf of Habitat for Humanity. He, with the help of fellow Collin College students, worked on building a home for a physically challenged homeowner.



Chance Sharpsteen

Collin College alumna **Iris Mostrom** along with her team from The University of Texas at Dallas students finished as one of the top competitors in the Capsim Challenge, an international competition determining which students have the business acumen to run a multi-million dollar enterprise. The competition had more than 1,750 students.



Iris Mostrom

Student **Euisun Field** received the fourth Andrea Patterson Memorial Scholarship, given by the Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologists.

Students and faculty from Collin College’s **Respiratory Care Program** raised \$3,635 to help raise awareness about lung disease. The team of four faculty and 13 students climbed 54 flights of stairs at Renaissance Tower in Dallas in the 2014 Fight for Air Climb for the American Lung Association.

# Faculty & Staff HIGHLIGHTS



The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts recently upgraded Collin College to the **Platinum Transparency Leadership Circle** for the highest level of financial transparency.

The Collin County Business Alliance presented the Leadership Award to Collin College District President

**Cary A. Israel.** President Israel spoke at the White Ribbon Rally hosted by the Collin County Council on Family Violence, the Congressional Veterans Commendation Ceremony and Leadership North Texas.



Cary A. Israel



Adrian Rodriguez

Collin College Board Trustee **Adrian Rodriguez** was named the Texas School Social Worker of the Year.

Congressman Sam Johnson awarded Collin College Professor of Criminal Justice **Dr. Stephanie Abromoske-James** the Congressional Veteran Commendation for the third district of Texas.



Dr. Stephanie Abromoske-James



Kerry Byrnes

Communication Professor **Kerry Byrnes** was selected for the National Communication Association Student-Learning Outcomes in Communication Project. She is one of only 24 faculty leaders in the nation selected.



Brett Adams

**Brett Adams**, professor of history, was elected president of the Heritage Association in Frisco.

**Dr. Seema Endley**, professor of biology, was selected as co-instructor of a five-week Summer Transitions Workshop at the University of North Texas in Denton. Funded by a grant from the distinguished Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the workshop targeted community college students with an interest in biological research and focused on isolation and identification of bacterial viruses. The goal of this program is to sustain research interest and fortify students with skills that will enable them to successfully transition to research universities both academically and through laboratory training in a research environment.

**Collin College** was recognized by Carter BloodCare as a Platinum Premier Partner, the highest level, for its dedication to saving lives by hosting blood drives.

History Professors **Dr. David Cullen** and **Dr. Kyle Wilkison** are the editors of the recently published book *The Texas Right: The Radical Roots of Lone Star Conservatism*. They, along with fellow history professors **Dr. Sam Tullock**, **Dr. Michael Phillips** and **Dr. Keith Volanto**, contributed chapters to the book.



Dr. David Cullen



Dr. Kyle Wilkison

**Virginia L. Holter**, professor of nursing, co-wrote an article published in the *International Journal of Evidence-Based Healthcare* along with colleagues from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and Baylor Health Care System. The article, “Content Analysis of Continuing Education for Cervical Cytology,” focused on assessing free and low-cost, web-based continuing education activities to determine if they reflect updated national guidelines for cervical cancer screening.

Professor of Chemistry **Amina El-Ashmawy** has been invited to continue her service as the chair of the American Chemical Society’s Two-Year College advisory board for 2014.



Amina El-Ashmawy

Collin College Professor and Director of Engineering **Dave Galley** received the Wylie Way Award from the Wylie Independent School District for his work in educating junior high and high school students in engineering, science, technology and math. The Wylie Way Award honors individuals who prepare students with college and career awareness and readiness.



Dave Galley



Gail Cronauer

Collin College theater professor **Gail Cronauer** was featured on the NBC TV show “Revolution” in the episode “Austin City Limits.” She has acted for nearly 30 years and has previously starred in hit TV shows such as “Walker, Texas Ranger” and she also appeared in an episode of “Dallas” on TNT.

**Michelle Millen** was appointed to the Council for Excellence in Education, a prestigious national appointment by the American Health Information Management Association Foundation. The foundation improves health information management by supporting the people, research and resources that advance the health information management profession.



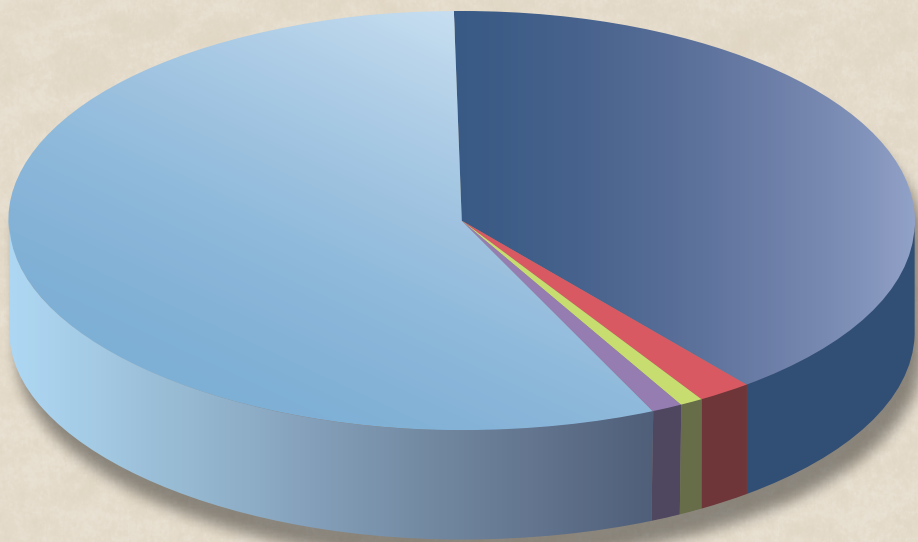
Michelle Millen





# Need for Scholarships

This chart shows the breakdown of how Collin College students who use financial aid or scholarships cover their educational costs.



- Federal Grants
- State Grants
- Foundation Scholarships
- Other
- Loans

27,000

Approximate number of students who applied for financial aid and scholarships at Collin College last academic year

10,000

Approximate number of students who received financial aid or scholarships and attended Collin College last year



## Respiratory Care program wins top honors

For a second consecutive year, Collin College's Respiratory Care Program received the Distinguished Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) Credentialing Success Award from the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care. Collin College is one of only 49 programs among the country's 438 that achieved this distinction. The commission presents the award to recognize a program's success in inspiring its graduates to achieve their highest educational and professional aspirations and to honor the RRT credential as a standard of professional achievement.

Last year, Collin College respiratory students graduated with a 100 percent pass rate on the state licensure exam. They also had a 94 percent job placement rate.

To learn more about Collin College's Respiratory Care program, please visit <http://www.collin.edu/rcp>.

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