

THE VIEW FROM THE VALLEY

Volume 15, Issue 5

November 12, 2020

WVC Marks 60th Anniversary on December 10

Reflections by Louise Acree, First Lady of WVC

With fond recollections, I recall opening the doors at Bluff Cottage on August 1, 1961, as Dean Ernest F. Anderson and I moved Wabash Valley College in approximately 15 minutes from the Little Brick School Building where he had occupied his office since June 1, 1961.

The first formal step to establish Wabash Valley College was taken on October 12, 1959, when the Board of Education of Community Unit District #348 gave unanimous approval to the Resolution that a Junior College be established as a part of the School District. In December the Board entered into a contractual agreement with the Educational Research Bureau of Southern Illinois University to conduct a survey of the District to determine the feasibility of establishing such a College. On January 12, 1960 an Advisory Committee of local citizens who were appointed by the Board of Education, began monthly meetings, and, through their efforts, the public received information that led to the approval by the voters on December 10, 1960, for the establishment of a District Junior College to be known as Wabash Valley College.

The Referendum on December 10, 1960 passed by more than a three-to-one margin (2,195 to 631), and history was in the making as the doors were

about to open for that first year of operation in Bluff Cottage, a former private residence near the High School.

Our office décor was quite simple, and I recall how thrilled I was to know that I would have an electric typewriter. Dean Anderson's office was upstairs, and mine was downstairs in the room that was also the Library, complete with three shelves of books. The Librarian, Irene Moore, was in our WVC Library in the mornings, and in the High School Library in the afternoons.

As one entered the door at Bluff Cottage, the Men's Rest Room was in the foyer to the left, and to the right was a large classroom (formerly the living room). There was a Library Reading Room adjoining the Library. Upstairs was the other classroom, a Faculty Workroom, complete with a hand-operated duplicating machine, Dean's Office, and Ladies Rest Room, complete with a bathtub. Downstairs in the basement was our "Student Union" with a ping pong table, vending machines, and lounge furniture.

In our first semester, September 7, 1961, we enrolled 75 full-time and 73 part-time students, offered 23 different courses, had 21 part-time instructors and an FTE of 5 instructors. We offered 14 classes at Bluff Cottage and 11 at Mt. Carmel High School.

There were many firsts during those early years. Making its debut was

our WVC College Choir, 80-voices strong, directed by Floyd "Pappy" Perkins, who wrote our School Song, "The Valley Rouser."

Our first yearbook, the Oubache, was published in 1962-63. We welcomed our first International student at Bluff Cottage, Farid Elias, from Syria, in Spring Semester 1962.

Students were a dedicated lot and were extremely active, especially considering the fact that they operated under very small and crowded conditions. Class Officers and Student Council were elected in October, 1962. They chose Red and White as school colors and Viscounts as the College Nickname. This was later changed to Warriors in 1966. (People had difficulty with the pronunciation and the definition of Viscounts.)

An important event, WVC's first graduation, was held at the American Legion Auditorium on June 2, 1963, for the first class of 18 graduates. Dr. Jacob Bach of Southern Illinois University gave the Address, and diplomas were awarded by Robert H. Orr.

With the 1963-64 year, a new Dean, C. Edwin Pearson, arrived to assume the role of leadership at WVC. During that year, WVC experienced growing pains and



Bluff Cottage

branched out to use facilities at Grace Greenwood Building on East Eighth Street, where classes in Electronics, Social Studies, Practical Nursing, and Radio were held.

Our Wabash Valley College Foundation was organized in December, 1963, with Don Horrall as the first President. Our present campus site was purchased by the Foundation for \$90,000 from the American Cancer Society, and the Foundation sold twelve acres of this 120-acre P. F. Hein Estate to District #348 for a new college site. Throughout the history of WVC, the Foundation has been active in its support and has continued to provide funds for buildings, renovations, scholarships, and programs.

Continued on Page 2

Reflections...(Cont.)

It is interesting to recall that WVC began on the Semester system, and changed to the Quarter system in 1968, to help in the transfer of our students to four-year universities, most of whom were on the Quarter system. We then reverted back to the Semester system in the 1987-88 academic year.

Ground was broken on July 14, 1964, for the building which is now Main Hall. Classes met in our new facility in September, 1965, with 263 full-time and 525 part-time students. WVC experienced a 100% increase in full-time students in 1965 – and that was when I requested assistance in the office; I had been serving as Secretary to the Dean, Registrar, and Business Director.

Changes occurred when a reorganization of junior college dis-

tricts was called for in 1965 by the passing of the Junior College Act by the Illinois State Legislature.

Another most important milestone occurred on July 1, 1969, when WVC became a part of Illinois Eastern Junior Colleges 529 (now Illinois Eastern Community Colleges), which consisted of Olney Central College and Wabash Valley College. Our District was joined by Lincoln Trail College and Frontier Community College in later years.

In those early “Bluff Cottage Days,” the existence of the “WVC Family” had its beginning. We have been privileged to be served by an outstanding and dedicated faculty and staff, dynamic Deans and Presidents, Chancellors and CEO’s, and a most dedicated Board of Trustees. And, of course, our “Students” are the

“Stars of WVC!” They are why we are all here!!!

As I look over our picturesque campus, I realize the magnificent strides which have been accomplished over these 60 years, and I marvel at how truly fortunate we are to have such an outstanding educational institution right here in our community. WVC has proved to be one of the greatest assets in Mt Carmel and this area.

As we begin to celebrate this important milestone in the history of Wabash Valley College, we recognize the sense of pride and support of our community. The Foundation, community leaders, students, and residents of our community continue to lend support to WVC. This 60th Anniversary is a significant event in the continued progress and development of the College and its service to the community.

I believe in most cases in which history is being made, those involved cannot realize the significance of the event until it is viewed in retrospect. I realize the significance of Dean Ernest F. Anderson’s remarks to me on the steps of Bluff Cottage 60 years ago when he said, to that young lady of 24, “Louise, you will have something to tell your grandchildren someday, how you moved the College in 15 minutes and were present on that first day the doors were opened!” And, yes, I do have many things to tell my grandchildren! I am so proud to have played a role in an historical event of such importance, the beginning of one of the finest community colleges in our country!

What an incredible journey it has been!!

From Small Beginnings.....
And Look At Us Now!

WVC Foundation’s Drive-Thru Chili Supper a Success

The Wabash Valley College Foundation held their annual chili supper this year, with a bit of a twist. This year the Foundation held their chili supper as a drive-thru due to restrictions caused by COVID-19.

Despite the change of format, the event was a huge success, according to Foundation member Toni Brines.

“The traffic for the event was good, very consistent. It was a success, a huge success!”

Rod Rodriguez, the chairman of the chili supper event, noted that the Foundation almost ran out of chili within the first hour and a half.

“We had to go to Buehler’s to get supplies to make more chili. We ended up making 6 – 8 more pots of chili. It was a good night!”

The Foundation members are reporting selling much more than they had anticipated. According to Brines, the money they made from the chili supper will allow the Foundation to continue to support programs at the college.



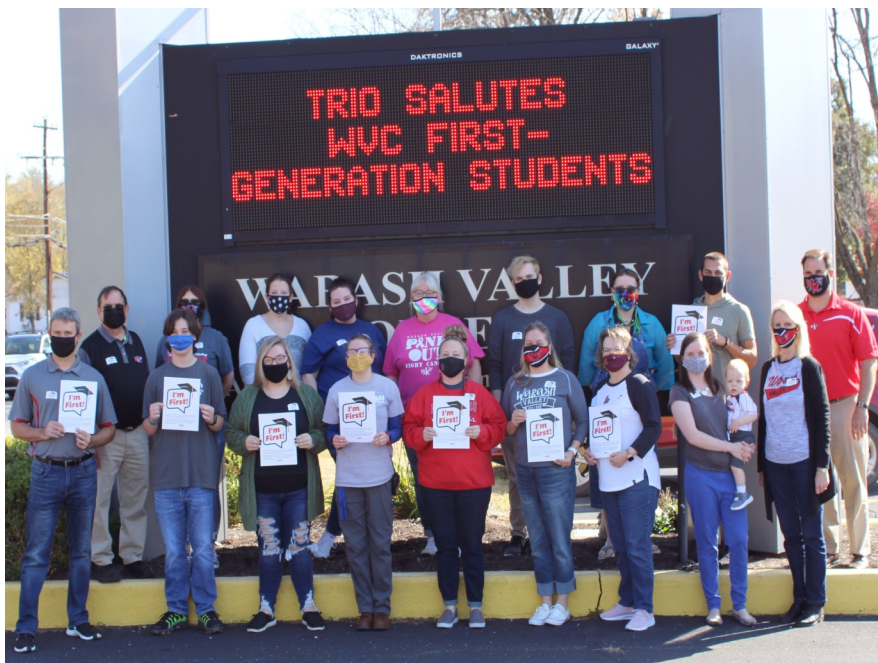
WVC Foundation members Toni Brines (above) and Rod Rodriguez (left) distribute chili during the drive-thru chili supper on Friday, November 6.

WVC TRIO Celebrates First-Generation College Students

Wabash Valley College's TRIO Student Support Services program invited WVC faculty, staff and students to celebrate first-generation college students on Friday, Nov. 6.

Eighteen members of WVC's faculty, staff and student body showed up for the celebration photo, and the TRIO Upward Bound program was represented as well. The goal was for students to see how many of the instructors and staff were students, at one point, just like them. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, masks were worn and TRIO SSS staff shared that they were saddened by not being able to create more activities for the celebration.

On Nov. 8, 2017, the Council for Opportunity in Education and NASPA's Center for First-



generation Student Success launched the inaugural First-Generation College Celebration.

Since that time, hundreds of colleges across the nation have contin-

ued to mark this date — the anniversary of the signing of the Higher Education Act of 1965 — as a day to celebrate first-generation students on their campuses.

lations to all first-generation college students!

First-Generation college student designation is one of the demographics eligible for the TRIO SSS program which is a free program. TRIO was brought about by President Lyndon B. Johnson as part of his war on poverty. Students who are income eligible also have access to this program.

Please contact Tayna Smith, the TRIO Academic Counselor at WVC, if you have any questions regarding the program.

Thank you to all who participated in the celebration photo, and congratu-

WVC's Academic Success Center Gives Guidance on Remote Learning Practices

Many students turned out for WVC's Survivor: Remote Learning Edition on Wednesday, Nov. 4. Organized by WVC's Academic Success Center, the event was built out as a means of instructing students in best remote learning practices in order to help students transition smoothly between learning modalities. ASC Director Tabby Niduaza taught a session on Entrata/Banner; Library Director Sandy Craig taught a session on library resources; and Broadcasting Director and Student Senate sponsor Kyle Peach taught a session on Office365. ASC Director Tabby Niduaza reached out to local community partners for donations to help drum up student interest in the event, and several community partners contributed to the prize pool.

Each student that attended the event received a pop socket, compliments of Wabash General Hospital, and was entered into a draw-

ing to win several prizes. The prizes up for grabs were an Insignia 32-inch Smart HD TV - Fire TV Edition, a 32 GB iPad donated by Wabash General Hospital, four \$25 gift certificates from Taco Tierra, two Large Pizzas from Little Italy's Pizza, 10 free scoops of ice cream from Famous J's Drive-thru, a free coffee from Café 82:3, gift cards from the Red Café, a t-shirt from the WVC bookstore and a t-shirt from 89.1 The Bash!

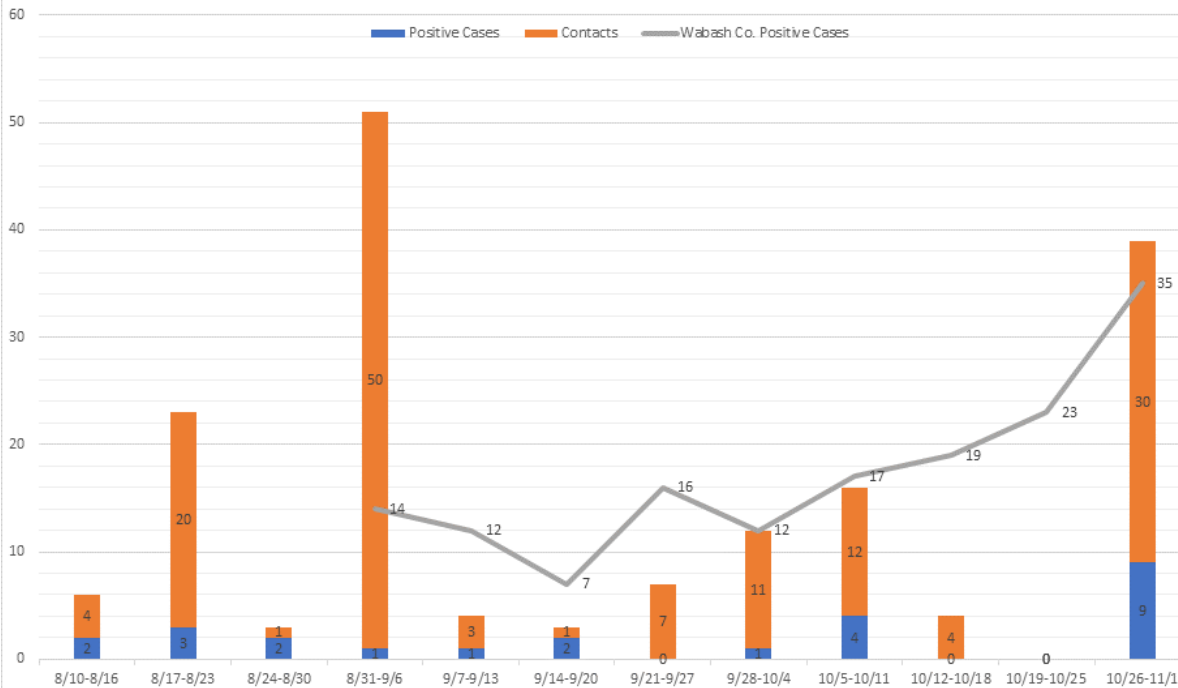
The big winners from the event were Ryan Johnson, who won the 32 GB iPad donated by Wabash General Hospital, and Makenna Langenhort, who won the 32" Insignia Smart TV.



Tabatha Niduaza, the Director of the Academic Success Center, speaks to students in the Brubeck Theatre about managing their time, using resources, navigating Canvas, and setting notifications.

WVC COVID Update

WVC COVID Stats



Wabash Valley College and all of its faculty and staff remain committed to the health and wellbeing of our community and to limiting the spread of COVID-19.

At the beginning of the semester, athletes and coaches coordinated to get 150 athletes moved onto campus. Since that time, WVC students, faculty and staff have done a remarkable job of limiting the spread of COVID-19 on campus.

“There is a clear upward trend over the last month in Wabash County and the College was following that trend until this past week when our number of cases fell to zero on campus and the number of people quarantined dropped to four,” said WVC President Matt Fowler on Oct. 19.

Over the past month and a half, WVC has had three weeks with no students testing positive for COVID-19 on campus.

On Oct. 30, Dr. Fowler wrote in an email that “we didn’t have anyone on campus that had reported being quarantined or testing positive for COVID. Meanwhile, the number of cases per week in Wabash County

continues to increase. Fast forward to this week, we have both our men’s and women’s basketball teams, including coaches, quarantined. The Wabash County Health Department tested each of the players and they are awaiting their results.”

A few days later on Nov. 2, Dr. Fowler sent out an email explaining that “a couple of basketball players reported symptoms last week and tested positive at the beginning of this week. That resulted in the quarantine of all men’s and women’s basketball players and coaches. The Wabash County Health Department has subsequently tested each of the individuals. A total of nine individuals tested positive and all 30 remain quarantined.”

WVC Athletic Director Mike Carpenter sent a follow-up email after Dr. Fowler’s.

“As part of our daily protocol, we take digital temperatures and have each athlete answer a series of questions, provided by the Illinois Department of Health, before they

are allowed to participate in any sport related activity.

We did have two people, an athlete and a staff member, report symptoms, and those individuals were immediately isolated. The next day, another athlete reported symptoms. While all members of the men’s and women’s basketball teams were tested by the Wabash County Health Department, none of these students were allowed on campus until we received test results.”

The Athletics Department received confirmation from the WCHD that there were seven athletes and two staff members who tested positive. All 31 athletes and seven coaches of the men’s and women’s basketball teams have been on quarantine since that time, with 22 of the 31 student-athletes quarantining at their parents’ residences.

WVC Contact Tracer Isaac Wodajo reported on Nov. 10 that the soccer team was quarantined until mid-end of the week of Nov. 22. Wodajo also stated that the baseball team reported some symp-

toms, and some players were tested Nov. 9.

As for the men’s and women’s basketball teams, they are now out of quarantine and back to practices this week.

“Overall, contact tracing on campus has picked up over the past three weeks, but that was expected with the weather changing and more people being indoors now for easier transmission of COVID-19,” said Wodajo. “The faculty, staff, and students have been vigilant with mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing when possible, which is evident with the lower numbers on the WVC campus. I believe it’s been handled well and with the help and direction from Dr. Fowler, we have tested individuals when necessary and stopped the spread in many different cases by working quickly and efficiently.”

Since WVC began contact tracing, the college has had an average of two COVID-positive cases identified on campus. While the goal is ultimately to have no COVID-positive cases, we are immensely proud of the WVC community as they have been diligent about helping to lessen the spread of the virus.

The protocols set forth by the Board have worked, as we were able to identify, isolate and inhibit the spread of COVID-19. Our coaches, athletes, students, faculty and staff will continue doing their part to follow the protocols put in place by the state and local governments, as well as the extra mitigation practices developed by the IECC Board in regard to athletics.