

# Accolade

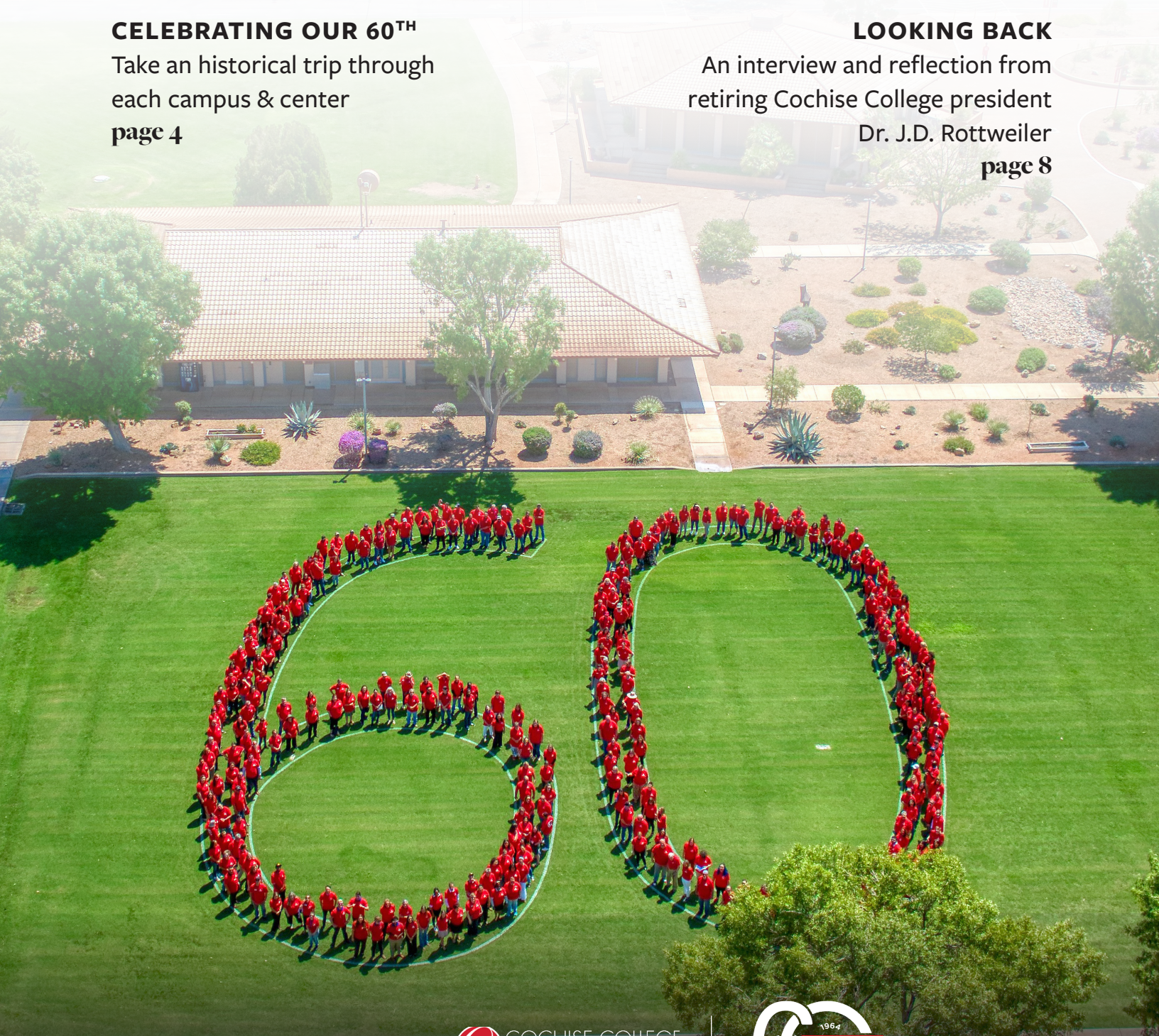
Fall 2024

## CELEBRATING OUR 60<sup>TH</sup>

Take an historical trip through  
each campus & center  
page 4

## LOOKING BACK

An interview and reflection from  
retiring Cochise College president  
Dr. J.D. Rottweiler  
page 8



A publication of the



# Board President's Message



## THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR AT COCHISE COLLEGE WILL GO DOWN AS ONE FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS.

Indeed, the college is both consulting and creating history as it celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

For example, the fall semester saw the burning of a diamond-themed sculpture at the Pit Fire Pottery Festival, while the newly digitized student newspapers from decades past reveal that early students also hosted an annual bonfire, albeit much less elaborate and in a different campus location. On a more personal level, I have been able to participate in the selection and induction of three new members of the Cochise College Hall of Fame, as well as the public introduction of a new candidate for Cochise College president.

Having said that, I would be remiss if I didn't call your attention to and congratulate Dr. Rottweiler for receiving the Association of Community College Trustees 2024 Chief Executive Officer Award for the Pacific Region. Dr. Rottweiler's leadership and vision have resulted in advancements at the college that have made meaningful improvements in the lives of students, our communities and those around him. That's thousands of people! I think it is safe to say that Cochise College is no longer a "best kept secret." Rather, it is a powerhouse of southern Arizona and a destination for anyone who seeks growth through learning.

December is drawing to a close as I write this. I thank you for your dedicated generosity which enables Cochise College to exceed expectations and its students to succeed. By promoting student success through scholarships, program support and facilities development, you help inspire passion and purpose through the education of our students, and that, ultimately, enhances our community.

*Larry Borger*  
*President*  
*Cochise College Foundation*

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*"Accolade" inspires charitable support of Cochise College by raising awareness about competitive advantages of the college and the activities of its students, faculty, staff, and the Cochise College Foundation, which promotes student success through scholarships, facilities development, and program support.*

**Cover photo:** *Cochise College faculty and staff gather to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the institution.*



# *From the Cochise College President*

## **IF YOU HAD TOLD ME 16 YEARS AGO THAT I WOULD BE COCHISE COLLEGE PRESIDENT**

and that I would stay for 15 plus years, I would not have believed you. I wasn't looking for a job. In fact, I was on track to be the next president at the college in the Wyoming community where I was raised. But I knew Cochise College was well-regarded. I had met my predecessor, Dr. Karen Nicodemus, on the accreditation trail. Once I dug deeper, this little college wrapped its roots around my heart.

But where could I make a difference? I decided to start by expanding on something that was already in progress. The college was making facilities improvements that would better match the learning environment with its reputation, so we focused on assimilating "everything speaks" across the institution, seeing things through the eyes of the student and creating "wow" experiences. I think we've been successful. A community member who returned after two decades away told me he takes out-of-town guests to walk the campus!

We also put significant effort into supporting community needs. Of this, I am extraordinarily proud, as we can point to a dozen new difference-making programs

developed through partnerships during my tenure. The community has pulled together to help us make them a reality.

What I'll miss most in retirement is the people. I have always loved the variety of people you meet in higher ed, from the conservative buttoned-down business professional to the casual and unstructured art faculty, from the people who have been with me and supported my vision for a long time to the excitement of the new employees. And, I have been fortunate to have had probably the best board of trustees in the country. They've allowed the college to take reasonable risks to move things forward, encouraged us, and never held us back.

My 2009 self thought that if I was going to leave the comfort and stability of home, I should go to the right place. Cochise College turned out to be that place. I hope I've made it better than I found it.

*J.D. Rottweiler, Ph.D.  
President  
Cochise College  
jdr@cochise.edu*

# College marks 60 years of growth, service



## **A LOT HAS CHANGED FOR COCHISE COLLEGE IN SIX DECADES.**

From opening an unmanicured campus west of Douglas to a state-of-the-art healthcare training facility in Sierra Vista, the college has always been responsive to the community, be it soldiers returning from war and seeking to use their military benefits, or recent high school graduates living a college experience close to home. Cochise College has been fortunate to steadily evolve and advance and to bring high-quality learning experiences—even unexpected ones—to a rural population on the edge of the nation. The following describes how the current college locations came to be.

### **DOUGLAS CAMPUS**

In 1961, citizens of Cochise County recognized the need for higher education. They conducted a vigorous campaign to create a junior college district. The campaign was a success, and on Oct. 17, 1961, by a margin of more than seven to one, county residents voted to approve the formation of the district.

*Douglas Campus, circa late 1960s*



On Aug. 21, 1962, county residents came together again to vote on and pass a \$1.6 million bond issue to build Cochise College. Construction of the Douglas Campus began on Sept. 23, 1963. A groundbreaking ceremony that day marked the momentous occasion.

Nearly a year later, on Sept. 21, 1964, Cochise College opened and began its first year of service to students. For the past 60 years, the Douglas Campus has served students from throughout the county, across the country, and all over the world!

The Douglas Campus underwent several changes to meet the needs of its students. Initially, the campus consisted of 12 buildings: Administration, Faculty Office, Fine Arts, Gymnasium, Liberal Arts, Library, Little Theater, two Residence Halls, Science-Technology, Student Center, and Vocational. Now, the Douglas Campus is home to 20 buildings and will continue to evolve as needed.

### **FORT HUACHUCA**

Since the first year of classes, Cochise College has been dedicated to bringing college-level courses to communities throughout the county.

Fort Huachuca boasts one of the oldest partnerships between a community and the college. In 1964, the college worked with fort officials to bring classes to the area. At that time, the college signed its first contract with the fort to offer lower-division classes at the Army Education Center on post. The University of Arizona offered upper-division courses.

This agreement began a long partnership between the two entities. Since then, Cochise College has collaborated with the fort to offer courses under the U. S. Armed Forces Institute (USAFI), organize a STRATCOM program, offer aviation courses, and more.

As the fort and Sierra Vista grew, the area's education demand also increased. In 1972, Cochise College decided to build a secondary location to support the Sierra Vista-Fort Huachuca community. For a time, the college even offered classes at the fort's Smith Middle School to meet demand. Sixty years after its opening, the college still offers courses at the Army Education Center at Fort Huachuca.

## SIERRA VISTA

When the demand for education in western Cochise County increased, Cochise College began searching for a secondary location there. The college has been offering classes at Buena High School upon request since 1964. This partnership prompted the college to approach Buena High School about opening a college center at Buena.

In 1972, Buena partnered with the college to establish the Cochise College Center on the Buena High School campus at the northwest corner of Highways 90 and 92. The center consisted of two portable buildings with four classrooms and an office. A groundbreaking ceremony for the new center occurred on April 4, and a dedication and opening ceremony was held Aug. 13, 1972. A few days later, on Aug. 28, 1972, classes began.

In 1974, Cochise College was gifted 40 acres by Andrea Cracchiolo. The land gift and continuing demand for education led Cochise College to develop plans for a Sierra Vista Campus. A groundbreaking ceremony at the current Sierra Vista Campus location on Colombo Avenue was held Feb. 19, 1977. Less than a year later, a dedication ceremony occurred on Jan. 8, 1978. Finally, on Aug. 28, 1978, the Cochise College Sierra Vista Campus opened its doors to students.



*Above: Groundbreaking ceremony for the Sierra Vista Campus in 1977.  
Top right: Willcox Center circa 2000s.  
Bottom right: The portable Buena Center being moved to the Sierra Vista Campus, circa 1977.*

## WILLCOX

Before the Willcox Center, there was the Community Campus. From the beginning, Cochise College wished to offer classes outside of the main campus to meet the education needs of the residents throughout the county. If potential students could not make it to daytime classes on the main (Douglas) campus, Cochise College offered to bring courses to them.

At first, the Community Campus was a county-wide program with no dedicated location. Then, in February 1987, the college signed an agreement with Willcox Unified School District to place two temporary buildings at Willcox High School.

The Community Campus program eventually moved to the new Willcox Center. The program maintained the center and continued to organize classes at 14 different locations throughout the county, including Benson, Sierra Vista, Bisbee, Tombstone, St. David, and more.

In 2008, the college wished to build a more permanent facility to serve the Willcox area. It constructed a new Willcox Center just south of the district offices and the old temporary college buildings. Groundbreaking occurred on July 8, 2009, and Aug. 23, 2010 was the first day of classes in the new building.



## BENSON

The college offered courses in Benson as requested, similar to the other communities in the county. The need and desire for a permanent college center steadily grew. In 1997, the possibility of a Benson Center began to blossom.

In 1997, the Cochise College Foundation received 40 acres from a developer for a Benson site. Shortly after, the foundation conducted a capital campaign to raise \$300,000 to support efforts to obtain legislative aid for a Benson Center.

In anticipation of a Benson Center, the college signed a lease with Benson Executive Suites for a temporary Cochise College Benson Office in November 1997. This office helped organize Benson classes and start conversations with the community regarding the new center. By June 1998, HB 2505, the Benson Bill, passed in the Arizona House and Senate, and the college received \$1 million in funding for the project. That month, a sign erected on Highway 90 noted the site.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the new center was held Jan. 14, 2000, and an opening ceremony was held Aug. 15, 2000. The center opened for classes Aug. 21, 2000.



*Above: Exterior of the Benson Center in 2000.*

*Right: Construction of the Downtown Center in 2015. Photo courtesy of Herald/Review Media.*

## DOWNTOWN CENTER

In August 2014, Cochise College observed the need for a nursing and health sciences building. Discussions about designing and building a nursing and allied health facility on the Sierra Vista Campus started soon after.

In January 2015, the college entered into a letter of intent with the Legacy Foundation of Southeast Arizona concerning the former Sierra Vista Regional Health Center facility. The Legacy Foundation was willing to hand over the old hospital to Cochise College to support the development of a nursing and health building. The college officially gained possession of the facility on June 15, 2015, and demolition and remodeling began the next month. A ribbon cutting and open house took place Aug. 19, 2016, and the first day of classes occurred on Aug. 22, 2016.

The Downtown Center is home to Nursing and Allied Health, Culinary Arts, Cybersecurity, the Small Business Development Center, and the Center for Lifelong Learning. This center also houses community partners.



# Campus tours reignite alumni memories

When the Douglas High School Class of 1964 organized its 60<sup>th</sup> class reunion, it seemed only fitting that it include a tour of the college that was also celebrating a six-decade milestone. Many from the DHS class also were members of the first class to attend Cochise College. The tour began in the Student Union and visited the student services/TRiO buildings, residence halls, aviation, art/welding, and gymnasium. Today's campus impressed participants, who indicated they wished they could enroll now.

The Cochise College Foundation can arrange tours for alumni and friends of the college. Contact us at [alumni@cochise.edu](mailto:alumni@cochise.edu) or (520) 417-4149.



In November, Vickie Vogler, left, George Wycoff, center, and Yoli DeLeon, members of the Class of 1970, celebrated Homecoming Weekend with a tour of the Douglas Campus and an evening at the Pit Fire Festival. The visit sparked many memories, such as the 1969 naming of the campus snack bar. Having attended in the college's early years, the three remembered fires during Spirit Week taking place near Highway 80. They were surprised by today's art-inspired bonfire on the north side of campus, which features fireworks, live music, food, student and art booths and draws a wide audience from the community.



Pictured left to right are: David Kurdeka, Rosaline (Campas) Pintek, David Mosow, Joe Hutchinson, Judy (Helm) Moulinet, Magda (Kafka) Bennett, Jesus Moulinet, Ruth (Nichols) Felske, Juanita Peña, Abram Peña, Esperanza (Ocaño) Molina, Nadia (Englehart) Villalobos, Luciano Ramirez, Donald and Eloisa Reay, Belinda Kimble, Rudy Friend, and Chaz Smith.

# Spring 2024 historical photo identification



Thank you to Joey Lomeli for helping identify the members of the women's basketball team who appeared in the last issue. Lomeli identified them as: #14 - Elaine Parenteau, #32 - Teresa J. Hill, #34 - Chris Harris Copeland, #44 - Sylvia Jones, #50 - Teresa Jaksich Gilmour, #52 - Danyle Watson, #42 - Diana Huber Bliss, #40 - Valerie Bloss Soistman, #22 - Robyn Brown Vogel, #54 - Tracy Simanson, #20 - Sheri Wimsatt, #24 - Sheryl Magargee, Margi Chatwood (front left) and Coach Larry Neidich. Spellings were modified by Librarian/Archivist Ashlee Gray to match what appeared in *The Apache* V. 1 No. 2 student newspaper.

# “Hyper-local” focus marks Rottweiler’s tenure



**LESS THAN SIX MONTHS FROM NOW,** retiring Cochise College President J.D. Rottweiler will swap the dry heat of southeast Arizona for the frigid climate of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. He and Melanie, his wife of 35 years, have committed to an 18-month mission to help bring democracy and religious freedom to the country that is sandwiched between Russia and China. Rottweiler will serve in communications and public affairs for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, working with government officials, interfaith groups and community leaders.

Not only does the location raise eyebrows due to the state of world affairs. It’s also a noteworthy commitment for someone whose dedication to Cochise College and the communities it serves merits sailing into the sunset.

Rottweiler’s philosophy as president was to engage the community to drive the direction of the institution. That meant tireless appearances and participation, often in the public eye. It

meant listening to needs voiced by the community and figuring out how to meet them, sometimes breaking with long-held beliefs or processes. It meant encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit at the college when needed and constantly standing up for the institution and its employees.

*“We compared ourselves to other colleges. But I wondered...how does our county compare to others?”*

“Community has driven it all,” Rottweiler says.

When he arrived in 2009, like most colleges, “We compared ourselves to other colleges. But I wondered... how does our county compare to others? I saw holes and shifted my attention to the local area. That changed everything.”

That shift has led to improved opportunities for students and the community. For example, students in the residential construction technology program learn the basics of home construction to obtain entry-level employment in the field, and the houses they build in an unincorporated part of Sierra Vista are then sold at a price reasonable for first-time buyers. Each project house improves the



Dr. J.D. Rottweiler's tenure as Cochise College president culminated with the **Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) 2024 Pacific Region Chief Executive Officer Award**, celebrated at the ACCT Leadership Conference in October.

ACCT, a non-profit organization of governing boards representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees serving more than 500 institutions, annually recognizes one CEO in each of its five regions for tremendous contributions to community colleges.

In nominating Rottweiler for the honor, the Cochise College Governing Board noted his extraordinary impact on higher education, particularly in Arizona and Cochise County. Throughout his 15-year tenure as president of Cochise College, he has advocated for and garnered state support to restore funding for rural colleges, positioned the institution as a leader in education and economic development, and strengthened and maintained collaborative relationships to enhance and offer innovative education to the rural communities in the county.

"Every member of the Cochise College Governing Board felt extremely proud upon learning about J.D.'s national recognition by the ACCT," said Tim Quinn, Governing Board chair. "His exemplary leadership and passion for enriching the life of every Cochise College student is only matched by his dedication to improving the lives of those who live in the communities of Cochise County! This award recognizes J.D. as one of the best of the best community college presidents."



*Dr. J.D. Rottweiler receives the Presidential Chain of Office at the college's 59th commencement. This chain honors the past presidents of the college.*

neighborhood, and the proceeds fund the project house for the next cohort of students.

The development of the Sierra Vista Downtown Center is another point of pride. Located in the heart of town, it is a state-of-the-art nursing, allied health, cybersecurity, and community services facility.

"What would it have been otherwise?" Rottweiler ponders now, though there were times when he thought he'd made a grave mistake in pursuing the project.

Needs of the community also led to the reintroduction of local Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training. The Southeast Arizona Law Enforcement Academy at Cochise College developed due to the unaffordable cost to local agencies of sending recruits elsewhere for training. It draws students from agencies in Cochise County and beyond, graduating 21 from the most recent class.

The partnerships involved are a highlight of each project. Local municipalities, county government, non-profit organizations and businesses all played a role in helping move initiatives forward. Partnerships also helped curry favor with the state legislature, which helped fund the recently opened indoor firearms training center and an automotive technology facility on campus. Prior to opening the campus auto shop, the college held classes in a vacant facility owned by Lawley Automotive.

"J.D.'s adeptness in forging strategic partnerships has been instrumental in advancing Cochise



College’s mission,” said the Governing Board in its successful nomination of Rottweiler for the Association of Community College Trustees 2024 Chief Executive Officer Award for the Pacific Region. “Collaborations have facilitated the integration of cutting-edge simulation technology and helped address critical training needs in rural areas at an affordable cost to the community.”

At 15-plus years, Rottweiler is the longest serving president of Cochise College. These days, the average tenure of a community college president is less than half that, and numerous challenges could have driven him elsewhere.

For example, he arrived during the Great Recession, when state funding declined by \$3 to \$4 million. Rottweiler’s mantra was to not hunker down. Instead, the college figured out how to give salary increases for employees every year. It borrowed money and upgraded facilities because construction firms were looking for jobs and prices were good.

Dealing with the pandemic, however, was miserable.

“It got to be such a challenge to tell staff where we were going when we knew that it would change by the very next day,” Rottweiler says, noting the need to motivate employees was top of mind. “The employees are the college.”

During that time, the college both opened to the public much earlier than many other Arizona institutions and developed digital options for the

classroom and the workplace that it continues to use today. Rottweiler wishes that during his tenure the college could have found a way to build additional new housing at the Douglas Campus but notes a new port of entry could be a game-changer.

His role, he says, has been to keep the college moving forward, innovative and exciting. So how has Cochise College changed him?

“I never dreamt I would stay at a place for 16 years. But I really began to see the impact of stable, visionary leadership. I tell my colleagues, ‘You come in as a new president, and you have an opportunity to rock the boat. But then you have a responsibility to stay long enough to get everyone back in the boat. If you leave with people still bobbing in the water, it could take the institution years to regroup. Stay when it’s hard.’”

“Cochise College has changed me in that I realize now that time can make a difference.”

Despite their overseas plans, the Rottweilers intend to remain Sierra Vista residents. Both sets of their parents live nearby, as do two of their children, who have little ones of their own. The only lingering doubt is how he will move in local circles when he is independent of Cochise College, though a run for office may be on the table in the future.

“Can I survive without being Cochise College? I think I can, but I don’t have any experience in the county without being the president. Will people still talk to me?”



# Hall of Fame inducts two alumni, college retiree



## TWO COCHISE COLLEGE ALUMNI

who graduated in the 1980s and a former employee who played a role in the college's technological journey were inducted into the college Hall of Fame in November.

The induction of Mark Dannels ('85), Cochise County sheriff (left); Michael J. Ortega ('81), former city and county manager (middle); and David Velasco, the college's first audio/visual technician, took place during the college's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary Homecoming Weekend, which also included the annual Pit Fire Pottery Festival. The inductees were honored for their role in advancing the college's legacy or for leaving a legacy that made a significant impact on the institution or its students.

In his nomination of Dannels, Cochise College President Dr. J.D. Rottweiler noted his leadership role in bringing the Southeast Arizona Law Enforcement Academy back to Cochise College. The academy was revived after the cost of training recruits in other locations became unaffordable. It has provided training for dozens of new cadets locally and from around Arizona, and it has grown to include simulation learning opportunities and a new indoor firearms training facility. Dannels earned an associate of applied science degree in administration of justice from Cochise College, and he holds a master's degree in criminal justice management; he is a certified public manager. He progressed through the ranks with the sheriff's office, and his list of leadership positions and memberships is lengthy. Dannels is known nationally in law enforcement circles. He also coaches youth sports.

Ortega was nominated by Cochise College Foundation board member Mark Battaglia, who recalled their work together on a countywide waste management project. Ortega was a self-employed architectural drafter when he earned an associate of science degree at Cochise. He followed those with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master's degree in business administration. His experiences with IBM and Jerry R. Jones and Associates, and with the Pima County

Department of Transportation and Flood Control District, led to time as the Arizona State Engineer, as well as roles as city manager of Douglas, Cochise County administrator, and, most recently, city manager of Tucson.

Foundation faculty Dr. Joe Gilliland's nomination of David Velasco highlighted the instructional technologies that appeared when Velasco was hired as the college's audio-visual technician. Velasco had served in the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Forest Service. He was first hired at Cochise as a janitor, but his military training in electronics and communications led him to the college library. The college went from providing books, chalk and a board to having overhead projectors and screens in every classroom, slides from faculty travel to use in lessons, and recorded lectures that could be accessed by students. The end of Velasco's college career also marked the beginning of the Instructional Media Services Department, and technology has now evolved to the point where every college employee has some level of technology skills, supported by a full-fledged information technology department.

Inductees received a metal wall plaque created by Cochise College retiree Randy Fox ('08), as well as a certificate of Special Congressional Recognition presented by Fiona De Young from Congressman Juan Ciscomani's office.

## HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS

The nomination cycle for the 2025 Cochise College Hall of Fame is currently open. The college seeks to honor former students and employees, community leaders and volunteers who have played a role in advancing the college's legacy or who have left a legacy that made a significant impact on the institution or its students.

The nomination deadline is June 1, 2025, and the form can be found by searching "Hall of Fame" at [cochise.edu](http://cochise.edu). Candidates who are unsuccessful in the year they are nominated will remain in the pool for two additional years. Questions can be emailed to [alumni@cochise.edu](mailto:alumni@cochise.edu).

## *New program supports dental offices*

Nine students enrolled in Cochise College's new dental assistant certificate program in Fall 2024. The 16-credit course includes six courses, mostly offered in eight-week sessions. Students learn to effectively perform front and back end dental office duties to support smooth and profitable dental practice operations; demonstrate the management of client medical information, treatment experiences, and oral health education; provide effective chairside assisting for general, specialty, and emergency dental procedures using state-of-the-art, dental science-based practices; and implement industry-standard principles and quality assurance guidelines for dental infection control, aseptic techniques, and hazard management.

A second cohort of students will begin the course in Spring 2025. The new program also opens the door to the possibility of a dental hygiene program in the future.



## *Archived student newspapers available digitally*

Cochise College alumni and history enthusiasts can now explore past issues of *The Heliograph*, a student newspaper, through the Arizona Memory Project (AMP), a statewide digital repository. Volumes published between 1960 and 1980 are now accessible online, providing insight into the college's history and the lives of its students. Readers can browse all issues at [azmemory.azlibrary.gov](http://azmemory.azlibrary.gov). In addition, *The Heliograph* is featured as a subcollection on the AMP landing page, making it easy to find and view.

"The digitization of *The Heliograph* represents a significant step toward preserving the college's legacy," said Ashlee Gray, college librarian-archivist. "*The Heliograph* captures student life, community involvement, and Cochise College through the decades."

While the AMP files are available at 150 dpi to ensure faster load times and efficient storage, those

seeking higher-resolution copies can request them directly from Cochise College Libraries.

According to the AMP website, "The Arizona Memory Project helps researchers discover information related to the history and government of Arizona by providing access to primary sources in Arizona archives, museums, libraries, and other cultural institutions." The Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records manages the project and is dedicated to preserving and sharing the state's historical and cultural heritage.

First published in the 1960s, *The Heliograph* covers a range of topics from student achievements, athletics and college events with famous performers. The newspaper provides a lens on the changing perspectives of students at Cochise College, making it a unique resource for alumni, students, faculty, staff and the general public.

*Art faculty Ash Dahlke, right, and Cochise College alumnus Javier Fimbres ('77) view a print version of The Heliograph that was displayed on campus this semester.*

# *LOI sets stage for training of mine personnel*

Cochise College and Excelsior Mining Corp. have entered into a letter of intent for a local workforce development partnership for the under-construction Johnson Camp Mine and future development of the Gunnison Copper project in Cochise County.

Based on the LOI, Excelsior welcomes engagement by the college to design, set up and administer Excelsior's apprenticeship program; and to develop specialized course content, such as Mine Safety and Health Administration training or process plant instrumentation technical training, including the possibility of Excelsior providing for qualified course instructors. In addition, the company may participate in college career days and in job boards to advertise available positions.

Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Craig Hallworth said the company is rapidly constructing the Johnson Camp Mine, which will be a crucial part of its clean energy supply chain and provide dozens of permanent mine jobs and temporary construction jobs. The site is located just north of I-10 near Dragoon.

"Cochise College is excited to explore workforce training opportunities with Excelsior Mining that will create jobs and strengthen the economic vitality of our county," said Dr. James Perey, executive vice president for academics at Cochise College.



# *Doctoral work identifies strategies to enhance community, student learning*

**COCHISE COLLEGE FACULTY AND LEADERS MELESA ASHLINE, ANGELA GARCIA, BETH HILL, MARY KING-POWER, AND CAT MATTHESEN EARNED DOCTORAL DEGREES EARLIER THIS YEAR.**



**DR. ASHLINE**, director of the Nursing Program, led an initiative to improve sepsis management in a rural Arizona emergency department by implementing the Society of Critical Care Medicine’s sepsis screening tool and the 3-Hour Bundle, a set of evidence-based recommendations for treating sepsis within three hours of suspicion. This project successfully reduced the mean time to antibiotic administration by 217 minutes, significantly improving outcomes for adults with sepsis or septic shock. By prioritizing timely interventions and education, the project demonstrated the impact of process improvements and advanced nursing practice on enhancing community health outcomes.

“This project underscores how continuing education and targeted process improvements can directly enhance patient care and highlights the critical role of advanced nursing practice in community health,” Ashline said.



**DR. HILL**, dean of Nursing & Health Sciences, spearheaded a project to address sepsis management at a rural critical-access hospital. Her Direct Patient Improvement (DPI) project focused on mitigating delays in antibiotic administration, identified as a significant issue at the facility. The project introduced an overhead “Code Sepsis” notification system to expedite care and foster timely intervention. Over eight weeks, the initiative resulted in a statistically significant reduction in the time from patient arrival to antibiotic administration, decreasing the mean time by 50.3 minutes. Hill’s findings highlighted the effectiveness of combining the SCCM’s 3-Hour Bundle with nurse-driven sepsis screening tools to improve timely sepsis treatment and patient outcomes in rural healthcare environments.

“These projects were chosen by the facilities where we were doing the projects,” Hill said. “Sepsis was identified by both as an area that needed improvement. It is currently the No. 1 reason for people dying in hospitals, and, in 2022, it killed more people than breast cancer, prostate cancer, and opioid overdoses combined, highlighting the reason it is a priority for most healthcare institutions.”



**DR. GARCIA**, dean of Liberal Arts, is a former mathematics faculty member. Her dissertation, “Enhancing Educational Choices: A Study of Mathematics Directed Self-Placement at a Community College,” assesses the effectiveness of Directed Self-Placement (DSP) versus traditional placement methods for college-level math courses at one institution. Using logistic regression analysis, it compares the success rates of students placed via DSP with those placed traditionally. Results show that DSP students generally have a higher chance of completing math courses within two semesters, though STEM majors benefited more from traditional methods. The study also examines how students’ choice of math courses under DSP affects their success rates. The findings suggest that while DSP can improve outcomes, it has limitations, particularly for STEM students. These insights are valuable for optimizing placement strategies in community colleges to better support student success.

“This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on academic placement strategies in community colleges, highlighting the potential of DSP to enhance educational outcomes while also recognizing its limitations and the need for a nuanced application. The implications of these findings are significant for educators, administrators, and policymakers striving to optimize placement processes and, ultimately, to support students in achieving their academic and professional goals efficiently.”



The research of **DR. KING-POWER**, English faculty, revolved around lowering attrition rates at Cochise College. The purpose of the research was to provide recommendations to retain students until degree completion. The college had already implemented many strategies, such as funding numerous student support services, hiring more bilingual faculty and staff, expanding the food pantry, contracting a licensed mental health counselor to meet with students face-to-face and via Zoom, and offering a summer bridge program. King-Power conducted semi-structured interviews with employees, facilitated a focus group with administrators, and surveyed students to identify more recommendations: hire a Spanish-speaking, full-time financial aid advisor for the Douglas Campus; make all forms available in both English and Spanish; encourage faculty to disseminate information to students; require CPD 150 or a college orientation; expand TRiO services to the Sierra Vista Campus; and offer more eight-week face-to-face classes.



**DR. MATTHESEN**, Reading faculty, focused on enhancing instructional practices among Cochise College instructors by integrating effective reading strategies into their pedagogy. Through a mixed-methods study, she examined how faculty adopt and implement these strategies, exploring the factors that influenced their use.

“This research not only contributes to academic discourse but also directly benefits our community by equipping educators with the tools to improve student outcomes. My work demonstrates how continuing education can foster better teaching practices, ultimately supporting the broader goal of community development through education.”

# Marketing team awarded for work

The Cochise College Marketing, Communications and Advancement team earned top honors in the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations District 6, which includes Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Utah, Guam, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The five medallion awards the team received recognize excellence in marketing and public relations at two-year community and technical colleges across the United States.

The team was recognized for its Creating Futures campaign with a gold for social media/online marketing; silvers for a brochure, computer-generated illustration and e-newsletter; and bronze for its recruitment/marketing program.



## Cochise Kudos

Residential construction technology faculty **Doug Schlarbaum** and Testing Specialist **Heather Gijanto** earned the Cochise KUDOS employee recognition award this fall. The program promotes a friendly and productive workplace and recognizes staff who exemplify the college's guiding statement values of collaboration, encouragement, civility, innovation and service.



## Student voter engagement effort earns recognition

Cochise College was recognized by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge (ALL IN) as a 2024 ALL IN Most Engaged Campus for College Student Voting. The college joins 471 institutions recognized by ALL IN for participating in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, sharing 2022 NSLVE Reports on campus voting data with ALL IN, developing and submitting a 2024 democratic engagement action plan, and having a current signatory to ALL IN's Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation. Cochise College hosted voter registration drives led by the Student Government Association, integrated civic influencers at both campuses to inspire student involvement, engaged two Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellows, and offered diverse civic learning opportunities and activities through student participation in the college Senate, Hispanic Serving Institution Committee, and library services book club – Conversations in Civility.





# Student scholarship stories



**LANAE ROGERS**  
*Major E.L. Suzie Walker USA ASA (ret.) Scholarship*

A widowed mother of three, Lanae Rogers has always managed to make ends meet. Recently, feeling overwhelmed by competing priorities, she opted to stop working. An hour later, Cochise College informed her that she was eligible for a scholarship.

"I cried. I laughed. I was overwhelmed with gratitude."

The scholarship was about the same amount she would have earned at the job she left. At Cochise College, Lanae is overcoming fear and self-doubt. Her objective is to graduate with critical thinking and networking skills that will help her break cycles in her family and community.

"Earning a degree through education opens my world of opportunity and gives me a springboard to fly as high as I choose. Being gifted this scholarship makes it possible; without it, it's only a dream. Thank you for this gift of education. Thank you for this gift of peace of mind. Thank you for this gift of hope. Thank you for believing in me!"



**MARIZELLA BENNETT**  
*Non-Traditional Student Scholarship*

Juggling multiple responsibilities while attending classes at Cochise is a challenge that Marizella Bennett faces every day. Between raising her children, academic commitments and employment, there just aren't enough hours in the day. Receiving a scholarship relieves a lot of the stress of financial obligations, working extra shifts, and college expenses.

"Cochise College provides the support systems, flexible scheduling, and accessible



**CHRISTOPHER DELGADO**  
*Thunderbird Field II Veterans Memorial Aviation Scholarship*

Christopher Delgado is the first in his family to enter the aviation industry. Just over a year ago, he began his aviation career at Cochise College. Not knowing what to expect, he soon learned that this career was meant for him. He wanted to make a life out of flying.

"My education at Cochise College has prepared me to become a professional aviator. With the help of incredible staff, instructors and classmates, I have gained valuable skills, experiences, mentorship and memories I will carry with me for the rest of my career," Delgado says. "My success is owed to the generous contributions Cochise College has made towards my education. You have allowed me to chase my goals and live out my dreams."

Delgado is now an instrument-rated pilot and soon will achieve his commercial certificate.

"This scholarship has been a colossal help that my family and I are very grateful for."

After training, Delgado plans to one day serve as a pilot in the National Guard.

"For some time, I've had a desire to serve this country in some form. To be a pilot in the armed forces would be an honor and I hope to one day have the privilege of achieving it."

resources I need to stay on track," Bennett says. "There will be more time allotted to my studies and the ability to focus more on growth and learning. This scholarship aids in opening doors that result in stable and prosperous careers and the advancement of my current career. This scholarship may help to bridge the gap in learning opportunities that may not have been available to me otherwise."

Receiving the scholarship has inspired her to work harder and make the most of this opportunity.



**JEFFREY STONER**  
*Manny Rivera Memorial Scholarship, Madelyn Pinto Memorial Scholarship*

Jeffrey Stoner sees his scholarship award as a "gift of knowledge." During the pandemic, he had a rough couple of years - moving, car trouble, and losing friends - but he views going to college as his ticket to a better paying job.

"These classes are the only way for me to better my life in a career that would otherwise be completely alien to me. I am enrolling to obtain my cybersecurity degree, and that will pave the way to a tech job that I hope to use to further my lifestyle and dreams. I want to support a wife and kids one day. I want to be a voice actor, and with the free time from work I will be able to do just that."

Stoner enjoys meeting new people who can help him be a better student. He sees the scholarship award as life changing for him, and he plans to make the most of the opportunity.

"Balancing work and school can be challenging, but this scholarship has made it possible for me to dedicate more time and energy to excelling in my studies."

Bennett plans to complete her bachelor's degree in nursing, with the ultimate goal of becoming a nurse practitioner or nurse midwife.

"I am committed to using my education to make a positive impact on the lives of others, especially in our community and throughout Cochise County."

# Soccer in region semis, rodeo continues in March

## THE 2024-2025 COCHISE COLLEGE ATHLETICS SEASON BEGAN IN AUGUST WITH RODEO AND WOMEN'S SOCCER COMPETITIONS.

New women's soccer Head Coach Santos Rangel spent two seasons as the assistant coach under Ricky Escalera, who stepped down for personal reasons. Rangel is a native of Yuma, and in his two years as an assistant coach at Cochise, the team had an 18-11 record, and he helped lead the Apaches to the NJCAA Region I title game in 2022.

The team also welcomed several new recruits, many of whom came from Mexico, Colombia and the United Kingdom. Sophomore returners looked to bounce back from the previous season and compete for a region title. Community Christian, Southern Nevada, and Mohave colleges joined the new-look ACCAC Conference this season, making conference play more competitive. Cochise finished the regular season 11-4-3, including a conference record of 8-3-2,

which earned the team a berth in the Region I semifinal game. During the semifinal, Cochise fell to Eastern Arizona College 3-1 at home.

Outgoing sophomore forward Sabrina Amezcua was selected as an NJCAA Second Team All-American for her historic season in which she scored 27 goals, enough for second in the nation. As the season ended, Amezcua, Michelle Gomez, Diana Montoya, Celiane Perriera, and Coach Rangel all received all-region honors.

The fall rodeo season got underway in late September when the new-look Apache teams participated in the Greenlee County Fair rodeo. The team welcomed new Assistant Coach Quint Bell and a slew of new members poised to compete at the national level next summer.

At Greenlee, the Cochise women finished second overall, while the men's team took third. The result was the same at the Cochise County Fair the following week.

The fall season wrapped up Oct. 11 at Mesalands College in Tucumcari, NM. As of Oct. 23, the women ranked second and the men third in the Grand Canyon Region, with members ranking in the top three in the region in saddle bronc, bull riding, steer wrestling, and goat tying.

The spring rodeo season begins in March and will include trips to Central Arizona College, the University of Arizona, New Mexico State University, and the annual home competition on Fort Huachuca.



*Left: Freshman Michelle Gomez of Colombia played all 18 games and started in 14 of them, earning six assists and scoring 11 goals.*

*Above: Taten Erickson ranks third in steer wrestling and sixth in tie-down roping in the Grand Canyon Region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association.*

# PATHWAY TO \$150K CHALLENGE



**COCHISE COLLEGE  
FOUNDATION**



Help provide scholarships for Cochise County students.

Log the miles you run/walk or cycle during March 2025.

For every 10 miles run/walked, or for every 30 miles cycled, earn a prize drawing entry.

\$40 + tax/processing fee

**Register: Pathway to \$150k**

Look for it on the left side of [cochise.edu/give](http://cochise.edu/give).

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## Now and Then

*To celebrate the college's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, "Diamond" was the theme of the 2024 Pit Fire Pottery Festival (left), which took place on the northeast side of the Douglas Campus. But to kick off the basketball season in the college's early years, the Spirit Week bonfire burned on the south side, near Highway 80 (right). Email [graya@cochise.edu](mailto:graya@cochise.edu) if you can identify the cheerleaders.*