



Northwest Iowa
Community College

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NEWS RELEASE

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Nancy McDowell Named Northwest Iowa Community College's 2014 Alumnus of the Year

Each year, one outstanding graduate of Northwest Iowa Community College is recognized for his or her success in their chosen profession and support of NCC. The recipient of the 2014 Alumnus of the Year Award is Nancy McDowell, Sheldon, 2011 graduate of NCC's Welding program.

McDowell took an untraditional path to NCC. Upon graduation from high school, she enrolled at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, and graduated in 2004 with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology. She began work at Midland Enterprises in West Des Moines, and also worked as a Legislative Clerk for State Representative, Royd Chambers. Over time, McDowell grew tired of her desk job at Midland Enterprises and urban lifestyle was not attractive any longer. She took her first leap of faith and moved back to Northwest Iowa and began welding classes at Northwest Iowa Community College.

Ever since her first day at NCC, she has left her mark on the campus. She was eager to learn and was a natural leader in the classroom. Upon graduation in July 2011, she was able to put "state champion welder" and "first female welding graduate at NCC in more than a decade" on her résumé.

McDowell continues to support NCC by teaching Continuing Education courses in Welding in the evenings, and by teaching adjunct in the Welding classroom during the day. She eagerly assists with NCC 8th Grade and Junior Career Days to inform our youth of the opportunities in the welding industry. She sits on the Welding Advisory Committee and our newly formed Alumni Advisory Committee. She has judged local SkillsUSA competitions held at NCC, and also serves as a mentor for students prior to competing in SkillsUSA competitions. McDowell also serves on the American Welding Society for the College, and has attended meetings at the state level for this committee on behalf of NCC. Furthermore, she is always eager to share her background in events like NCC Diversity Days, encouraging our students that gender, age, or stereotypes should never stand in the way of your passion.

Robert Hoting, NCC Welding Instructor, wrote in his nomination letter, “Nancy has been an instrumental part of the welding program at NCC. She teaches a thirty hour night class and specialized night classes for the Continuing Education Department and is an adjunct instructor for the welding credit program. She volunteers her time and participates with the high school Face2Face seminars and Junior and Eighth Grade Career Day activities. She also serves on the Welding Program Advisory Committee.”

McDowell is also very interested in serving her community. In 2012 she became the second woman elected to the O’Brien County Board of Supervisors in its one hundred and sixty three year history. She also chairs the O’Brien County Safety Committee, and sits on the Regional Youth Emergency Services Board. She also sits on the 3rd Judicial Board, and the Cherokee Mental Health Institute Citizen’s Advisory Board and the O’Brien County Enterprise Zone Commission. She is also a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Furthermore, she serves as Secretary for the O’Brien County Republican Party. One of her most recent accomplishments was being appointed by Governor Branstad to the STEM Advisory Council, an appointment that is directly related to her work at the county level and with NCC.

McDowell and her husband Brian Schussler, live in Sheldon.

PHOTO – (L-R): Nancy McDowell, Robert Hoting, NCC Welding Instructor