That’s the way we spell SUCCESS!

Whether you were on the cheerleading squad like me or a devoted fan with spirit, you probably remember a similar chant. For the team, success was about winning the game. For the individual, success may have been about making a basket, making the grade (be that an A or B or simply passing), completing a project in a certain period of time, or some other individual goal. The true meaning of success is personal, changing as our priorities change, changing along with our lives.

That is why at NCC true success is not measured in days, months, or years, but lifetimes. This edition features success stories from alumni whose lives, and therefore their communities, the region, and even remote parts of the world have been changed for the better because they chose to start at NCC. Successful alumni become lifelong learners and leave an enduring legacy of making a difference in the world.

John Bilsland’s passion for lifelong learning, combined with his desire to help everyone get a great education, led him to make NCC the beneficiary of his estate. It is our largest gift ever, and his success will help many others succeed.

To all of us at NCC, your success is our story. We can’t spell s-U-c-c-e-s-s without you! Please stay connected and share your success through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and the Alumni page on our website at www.nwicc.edu/alumni-community/. We will always be your cheerleaders, however you define success.

Time flies when you are having fun, right? I’ve been at Northwest Iowa Community College for 14 years, but it seems like considerably less — mostly because of the excitement that comes from working with the students, alumni, and our industry partners. We hear success stories every day at NCC, and it makes going to work every day interesting and challenging. Every student is different. Every alumnus has a different path to success. No two stories are the same.

And this magazine can help reiterate my point. It is so fitting to share some of these stories within a publication about our new tag line, “Your Success is Our Story,” because no truer statement exists for this institution.

NCC currently has 11,459 unique alumni stories, and that doesn’t include our current students, our industry partners, our continuing education participants, our business and industry learners and so many more. Thousands upon thousands of people have found that the path to success can begin with Northwest Iowa Community College. So many lives impacted….far too many to share in this magazine, but all significant.

We want to hear ALL your stories. Please don’t be modest. Hearing your stories gives us endless motivation to continue to be the best community college in the region. We are proud to be YOUR community college and part of your success.

To share your NCC story, please contact Kristi Landis at klandis@nwicc.edu or at 800-352-4907 ext. 164.
Patrick Peters may no longer turn a wrench, but his love of diesel engines runs deep.

Patrick, a native of Storm Lake, IA, grew up helping his father fix his fleet of diesel engines. Going into a program for diesel repair seemed only logical. After checking out other diesel programs, Patrick found NCC’s program to be the best in the area. He remembers enjoying the hands-on training. Even though he had a background in diesel repair prior to the program, he appreciated how much more in-depth he was able to understand the engines with the instruction.

“I vividly remember taking a field trip to Sioux Falls, SD, to visit Sheehan Mack. We had built an engine in class, and we took it up and watched it run through the dyno (an instrument used to measure the output of an engine). We then got to tour the facility. It was great getting to see all different aspects of the diesel industry,” shared Patrick.

Patrick graduated with his Associate of Applied Science degree in Truck and Diesel in 1985 and promptly went back to Storm Lake to run his own repair shop. He ran Peters Truck and Trailer for fourteen years and had six employees working under him. The shop gave him his first taste of managerial experience and offered a diverse work atmosphere. Patrick’s company fixed everything from bread vans to large agricultural equipment to aluminum trailers.

In 1999, Patrick started a new challenge in his diesel career. After realizing how much he enjoyed the sales aspect of the work, he sold Peters Truck and Trailer and started in the sales department for Peterbilt of Council Bluffs, IA. Within four years of being employed at Peterbilt, he was recognized as one of the top 100 salesmen for Peterbilt in the United States. He went on to achieve this ranking three more times there.

A few years later, a colleague offered Patrick an opportunity to join him in opening Midwest Truck Sales & Leasing LLC, a truck sales, repair and body shop in Omaha, NE. Patrick was eager for a new challenge, and the timing seemed right. Patrick left his job at Peterbilt of Council Bluffs, and again became a business owner. This experience taught Patrick a lot about how to market used trucks and how the leasing industry worked.

In 2015, Patrick was presented with a chance to again grow and challenge himself within the diesel industry. He accepted the position of general manager of a Peterbilt dealership in Portage, IN, with the Larson Group. Patrick now oversees between 50-75 employees and loves the challenges that come with managing a larger business.

“I feel like management is where I was meant to be. I love teaching employees and helping them become better employees.” Plus Patrick is still able to fuel his passion for sales with this position, as he still has clients and customers that he assists with their diesel needs.

Patrick credits his success with a simple philosophy — “Things may be hard from time to time, but stick it out and try new things. In the long run, it will always be for the better.”

Patrick’s Success is Our Story
To say Brian Frislie’s career has changed dramatically from when he attended Northwest Iowa Vocational School (later known as Northwest Iowa Community College) would be an understatement. A 1980 graduate of NIVS’s bricklaying program has turned into a well-renowned expert in the management of environmental services at large metropolitan hospitals, and even has him sitting in meetings with the former president of the United States of America to discuss the Ebola outbreak of 2014.

Brian Frislie grew up in Canton, SD. He attended NIVS out of necessity to learn a skill. The economy was weak in the 1980’s, and he was encouraged to pursue an employable skill. He attended NIVS from 1979–1980 where he earned a degree in Bricklaying/Masonry. After Brian graduated, the economy was struggling, and employment in bricklaying was difficult even for the experienced bricklayer. A friend encouraged him to join him at the New Jersey shore, where he tried his hand at commercial fishing. After a few months of working in the fishing industry, Brian learned that fishing trips that lasted for weeks at a time on the Atlantic Ocean weren’t just dangerous, they also weren’t financially lucrative.

Returning to New Jersey, Brian began working as a house painter for a local company in Avalon, NJ. After a summer of painting houses, an opportunity became available to work at Burdett Tomlin Memorial Hospital for Service Master cleaning patient rooms, operating rooms, and public areas. The job soon grew into a management position, with Brian managing twenty associates and understanding the importance of high level disinfection and the impact it has on patient outcomes.

Environmental Services functions in a hospital goes far beyond cleaning. It also includes being part of the hospital team in combating hospital acquired infection, and improving patient satisfaction. It requires precision and fast responsiveness and absolutely must work cohesively with the rest of the hospital staff to be effective.

Brian continued to move up in the career, working at five different health care facilities in New Jersey, Ohio and Georgia over the course of the next 26 years. Each job change was to a larger facility with more responsibilities, including linen management and patient transport functions.

By 2011, Brian secured a position with Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, GA, as the Director of Environmental Services. He was now responsible for overseeing 150 employees and the sanitary practices of a 585 patient bed acute care hospital.

If the name Emory University Hospital sounds familiar, it frequently made national news in 2014. It was the location of the first hospital to receive an Ebola patient in the United States. And working in Environmental Services, the proper handling, treatment and disposal of Ebola waste was imperative to stop the spread of this highly contagious, deadly illness.

“I went to work just like any other day and was instructed that I had an urgent meeting in a few minutes. I went to the meeting and was informed that we had 72 hours to prepare for the first Ebola patient,” says Brian. “Having trained with the Emory University Hospitals Special Communicable Disease Unit in cooperation with the Emory University Bio Safety Department, Center for Disease Control and the Department of Defense, we were prepared.”
I was informed that we had 72 hours to prepare for the first Ebola patient.

During the Ebola outbreak, Emory University saw four different patients come through with Ebola. Brian was one of four employees on staff that was responsible for the disposal of 4.5 tons of Ebola waste generated during the time these patients were cared for. This also required Brian to complete twice-a-day wellness checks for six months in the slight chance he would become contaminated.

Wellness checks and long hours weren’t the only thing different about Brian’s life for those long months. With all the news coverage and the strong feelings about the role the United States should play in the containment of the disease, Brian and his family were under a lot of stress. “People who didn’t work in the hospital and didn’t understand the disease treated you differently. It was fear of the unknown, and they were afraid to interact with me and my family.” Furthermore, the Frislie family found it difficult to watch TV or listen to the radio because of the intense and sometimes skewed media coverage.

“I had 100% confidence in my team. There were no egos, just the mentality that we need to pull together as a team.” All four patients survived, and no team members became ill with the lethal disease due to processes and practices of Brian’s staff.

Based on Brian’s experience with Ebola, he became a subject matter expert on the topic. He was contacted about process and procedures from hospitals nationwide, including the White House, the National Institute of Health, the World Health-care Organization, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). He met President Barack Obama on September 16, 2014, at the CDC offices to share lessons learned, and then disseminate the information to hospitals in West Africa. Brian has also met Former President Bill Clinton and John Kelly from the United States Marines (now in charge of Home Land Security), who wanted to know more about the disease and waste management. Brian has since led webinars, given many speeches on Ebola waste management, and co-authored articles about the proper Ebola waste disposal.

“We don’t push mops, we save lives,” states Brian.

Although he doesn’t lay bricks as an occupation, his knowledge in construction has definitely benefited him as he continued to grow in his career. A lot of Brian’s time is spent on construction, facility improvement, finish selection and building flow. Brian says his background in bricklaying and masonry does come in handy as he reviews blueprints, examines hospital inefficiencies, and finds logical and safe ways to remove waste from the facility. It has also helped with containing construction mess and potential unsanitary conditions during hospital remodels. Brian still has bricklaying tools in his garage and likes to dabble in carpentry work in what little free time he has.

And even though Brian has since changed job duties (in 2015, Frislie accepted a position as Business Manager at NOVO Health Services, which is a healthcare laundry and textile rental company focused on acute health-care facilities), he is still a consultant on the Ebola containment. And his passion for effective ways to clean medical equipment and facilities is still as strong as ever.
For Maria Lorena Salas Gomez, success was simply finishing her degree and getting a job that she loves, although there was nothing “simple” about her path to get there.

Lorena had issues beyond what most traditional college students face. Cultural barriers, lack of ability to obtain financial aid, limited access to scholarships, irregular work schedules for her and her husband, and three small children to raise were just a few hurdles that could have kept Lorena from achieving her dream.

Now, at the age of 28, Lorena’s life is exactly how she wants it to be.

Lorena was born in Mexico, but her family routinely moved between Georgia and Mexico while she was a child. Life was inconsistent as her family was always searching for steady work.

Then, at the age of 15, Lorena found out she was pregnant. She and her boyfriend (now husband), Rigo, both quit high school to find work to support their new family. Lorena worked as a cashier at a fast food restaurant in Georgia; Rigo worked as a laborer for a lumber company. Although not ideal, their family made ends meet for a few years. Unfortunately, in 2009 Rigo’s employer downsized and he found himself unemployed. By this time, Lorena, now 18, was pregnant with their second child. Rigo found employment working for a friend at a restaurant in Sioux Center, Iowa, and the family relocated to Northwest Iowa. It was at this time that Lorena realized a big change needed to happen to ensure a fulfilling and stable home life.

That first big change happened in 2011, when she completed her GED at Northwest Iowa Community College.

From there, Lorena began taking classes toward a Clerical Accounting diploma at NCC. She completed this milestone in Spring 2012 and gained full-time employment at Premium Iowa Pork in Hospers, Iowa, where she did Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable.

Although she was happy working with a great group of people and having stable employment, Lorena still felt like something was missing in her career. She had always toyed with the idea of being a nurse but thought the level of commitment necessary for her to be successful in her schoolwork was not feasible. She knew nursing was an intense program, and she had many challenges to overcome to consider going back to school again. Her kids were getting older and starting school, and Lorena kept busy with family tasks — mostly because she was the only English-speaking parent in a predominantly English speaking area. Furthermore, she was not eligible for any financial aid and only qualified for a handful of scholarships because she was not a citizen of the United States.

On a whim, Lorena applied for a “True Potential” scholarship. This scholarship focuses on creating opportunities for young immigrants who have Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) immigration status. When Lorena was informed that she was one of a handful of recipients of the scholarship, she felt like it was a sign that she needed to take this opportunity to obtain a degree in a career for which she truly had a passion.

...continued on page 15
Polly (Vander Linden) Schau is always up for a challenge, even if she wasn’t looking for one.

Polly, a native of Ashton, IA, is a 1991 graduate of Marketing Management at Northwest Iowa Community College.

After graduating from NCC, Polly began working in Human Resources at Van Wyk, Inc. in Sheldon, IA. In 1993, she accepted a position in Human Resources at Wells Enterprises, Inc. and completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in Human Resources through Briar Cliff University in Sioux City.

Polly valued the work she did in Human Resources, and she prospered in the work environment at Wells. She truly enjoyed working with the wide variety of people and the ever changing dynamics within the industry. She was perfectly content in her position.

And then an opportunity came her way. One day Polly was approached by the Senior Vice President of Retail Sales to consider moving into the sales side of the business. At first, Polly was intrigued and flattered but had very little interest. “I could think of dozens of reasons not to take the job, and I had talked myself out of even considering it.” However, the Senior Vice President of Retail Sales wouldn’t take “no” for an answer. After a few weeks of thought, she accepted the job, and is so happy and grateful she did.

For the last nine years, Polly has been immersed in the sales department at Wells Enterprises, Inc. as a Senior Business Development Manager. Polly really enjoys interacting with people nationwide and getting to travel to different parts of the United States. She also loves the challenges that come in sales. She now works with multi-million dollar accounts in an industry which is synonymous with fun. “Who doesn’t love ice cream,” says Polly.

“Life is too short not to do something you love,” shared Polly. “But as much as you may love your current situation, never be afraid to try something new when an opportunity comes your way.”

Polly credits NCC with laying the foundation for her career endeavors. “Not only was NCC cost effective and close to home, it truly laid a great foundation for my careers in Human Resources and Sales.” She vividly remembers classes with Ron Plum, Business instructor, and she has been able to apply the knowledge she gained in her coursework at NCC at every step of her ever-evolving career.

“Life is too short not to do something you love.”

Polly’s Success is Our Story

Maria Lorena Salas Gomez
Class of ’16
Nurse
Sioux Center Health

Polly Schau
Class of ’91
Senior Business Development Manager
Wells Enterprises, Inc.
A passion for education

John Bilsland’s love of learning leaves a permanent mark on Northwest Iowa Community College

During John Bilsland’s life, he was always working towards educating others, and that passion will not end due to his recent passing.

John Bilsland was born and raised on a farm by Archer, IA. He was described as a witty and intellectual child. He read a lot of books, played the piano, and avidly listened to classical music. "John even named his farm animals after opera arias," says John’s sister, Elaine Jerome. He was worldly at a young age, strictly because he had a thirst for knowledge, especially global history.

He graduated from Archer High School in 1946 and promptly joined the Army. Beyond serving his country, John spent his time in Germany and Austria absorbing what was going on around him, politically and culturally. Even at the young age of 18, John was studious. Larry Postma, attorney and close friend of Bilsland says, "John wrote scholarly letters to his mom during this deployment. I've read them, and they were all well thought out, well written and insightful. He wrote about things like seeing the Dachau Concentration Camps first hand, and the overall culture of the Germans and Americans after World War II. He soaked up culture, even during his time being deployed. That's just how John's brain worked." John also kept in touch with some German friends he made while stationed overseas via letter writing—just another way John always kept a pulse of what was going on around the world.

Upon being honorably discharged from the army in 1947, John came back to Iowa and attended the Iowa State Teachers College (now known as the University of Northern Iowa), utilizing the GI Bill. He received his teaching certificate in Spanish and taught Spanish in various high schools throughout Iowa, eventually settling down at the Estherville Community High School.

When John wasn’t teaching, he took trips to Spain, Mexico, Peru and other countries to immerse himself in different cultures. “He purposefully went to different areas in Mexico so he could learn different dialects,” shares good friend and former neighbor, Dean Olson. During these trips, John stayed with families in the area so he could always experience the culture to the fullest.

He was at the Estherville High School for 20 years before his retirement, when he moved back to Sheldon to assist his aging parents.

John lived a very modest and humble life. John rarely spent money on personal belongings like furniture or fancy clothes or on entertainment like movies. He seldom watched television. He was an avid reader and digested the information from books about history from around the world. He spent hours at the Sheldon Library feeding this thirst for knowledge. He had great appreciation of the written word, favoring books by Barbara Tuchman and the journalism of the Wall Street Journal newspaper. He loved listening to classical music on CD and would listen with a very keen ear, able to identify composers by their music. He spent many Saturday afternoons listening to the Metropolitan Opera on the radio. He’d routinely go for strolls around the neighborhood and enjoyed a good French-pressed coffee. Hobbies included looking at the thousands of photographs that he took of places he saw when he vacationed abroad and tending to his prized peony and hosta plants in his backyard. He also thrived on sharing his wisdom, life experiences and favorite books with his close group of friends.
John was very observant of current surroundings as well, including the needs of his local community college and the services it provided to the region. He regularly shared with Olson that the College was a vital part of the area and whole-heartedly believed that the education NCC was providing to its students was crucial to the growth of the area. With John’s love of learning and his appreciation for education, including NCC in his estate plan was a great fit.

“Happiness was sharing his love of learning,” says Jerome.

In 2013, John made the decision to leave most of his estate to Northwest Iowa Community College. The estate was valued at over $1.7 million between his investments and the family’s farmland. He hoped his gift would further benefit the students of the College and inspire others to grow intellectually and with a skilled trade.

John passed away as a result of a traffic accident in September 2016. He was 89 years old.

John Bilsland will now leave his mark on the world in a new way. He previously benefited others through his work in the Army, through teaching the Spanish language and by sharing his scholarly insight with those whom he socialized. Now he will benefit others by expanding collegiate resources at Northwest Iowa Community College.

John Bilsland may have led a very quiet and humble life, but with this gift to the College, his mission for learning and educating others will live on indefinitely.

PORTION OF BILSLAND’S GIFT WILL BE USED FOR STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

John Bilsland’s generous gift to Northwest Iowa Community College will leave a permanent benefit to the students. Although the specific and detailed use of the gift hasn’t been determined yet, it will go towards one or more of the initiatives set forth by the Everyone Knows Someone Who Chose NCC capital campaign. Alethea Stubbe, College President, feels a logical place for a large sum of the gift is in the form of student scholarships.

“Although we are still in the early planning stages of how to best utilize the Bilsland gift, I strongly feel John would have wanted a portion of it to help students who were in true financial need. Based on John’s past interests, I am sure he would find great joy in seeing his gift help a student who may not have been able to financially afford higher education,” states Stubbe.

With this size of a donation much of the gift will be endowed, which means it will be invested and the College will provide scholarships annually with the interest from the invested money. Because the original investment isn’t ever being depleted, the scholarship and investment should continue eternally. To put it simply, the Bilsland gift will continue to benefit the students of NCC with scholarships for as long as the College exists.

Other initiatives of the Everyone Knows Someone Who Chose NCC capital campaign include enhancing technology and classroom resources campus wide, and improving facilities. The remainder of the Bilsland estate not used for scholarships will go to one of these other worthy causes. A formal recognition of Bilsland’s gift to the College will occur at a later date.

I am sure John would find great joy in seeing his gift help a student who may not have been able to financially afford higher education.
Have you ever asked yourself, “What have I done to help others?” or “How will I be remembered?” The answers to these questions are personal and vary from life experiences and circumstances. There are a lot of ways to make your mark on the world including leaving a planned gift, or a legacy, to your favorite charity.

Non-profit charities like the Northwest Iowa Community College Foundation can truly benefit from charitable gifts, whether they are given during someone’s life or as a planned gift.

Why leave a planned gift in your estate?
• You receive a deep satisfaction knowing that you directly helped someone else.
• It gives you the opportunity to make a lasting impression to an organization you care deeply about.
• It enables you to have the final say on who gets your assets. Without a formal plan, your estate can be heavily taxed and your assets are dispersed in ways you may not have wished.
• By giving assets to a charity, the charity receives most of the gift, since the gift wouldn’t be subject to estate taxes.

Why leave NCC in your estate plans?
• If you have a passion for education and would like to help students succeed, a gift to the Northwest Iowa Community College Foundation is a great way to directly benefit the educational opportunities of our students.
• The College trains our skilled workforce! If you are passionate about the quality of the workforce in the area, a gift to the Northwest Iowa Community College is a great investment in insuring a high caliber of worker is being produced.
• Perhaps you or someone you know can attribute personal success based on an experience with the College and you realize that you can help others in a similar way.
• You can receive numerous financial benefits. Some of these benefits could be incurred while you are still living, while others are realized after you pass away.

Things to consider:
• Anyone can leave a gift. An estate simply means any money, property or personal belongings you own at the time of your death. This can include cash, farm land, life insurance policies and other assets. A gift of any size from your estate would be appreciated by a charitable organization.
• Although you aren’t required to notify the charity that they have been included in your will, by doing so the charity has the opportunity to speak freely with you to make sure your gift will be handled in a way that meets your request.

For more information on various ways to help the NCC Foundation contact Jan Snyder or Kristi Landis at 800-352-4907 to discuss options.
Lisa Groeneweg (Computer Programming – ’89) has had many titles during her life. Switchboard operator, production worker, massage therapist, farmer, trucking company manager, computer programmer. And now, philanthropist.

But the unique part of her philanthropy story is how she raises funds, and to whom those funds are directed. Lisa spends much of her waking hours saving the lives of elephants in Zimbabwe and remote parts of Africa. She is co-founder and president of Chengeta Wildlife, an organization that thrives on training people to guard endangered species from poachers and poaching syndicates. However, due to a decade long battle with leukemia, Groeneweg’s ability to manage the charity widely comes from her laptop while resting in her home in Rock Valley.

“When I was first diagnosed with leukemia, the prognosis wasn’t very good. When you have something like that happen, you begin to look back at your life. I realized that although I was very happy with what I had accomplished, I had never truly gave back in a way to help others,” states Lisa.

While researching leukemia online, Lisa came upon some internet stories about Rory Young, an anti-poaching expert, who was sharing his personal experiences about saving lions and the tragic ways he is seeing elephants getting slaughtered for their tusks. His stories spoke to Lisa, and she reached out to him asking how she could help.

A connection between Rory and Lisa emerged. Over the course of a few months, the two developed the non-profit organization Chengeta Wildlife. Rory is half a world away, training wildlife protection rangers. Lisa is in Rock Valley, IA, raising funds and managing the organization. They have a team of seven volunteer wildlife enthusiasts who serve on their board and help with the mission of the charity, including actor Josh Bowman. Through the power of technology, the team communicates frequently.

Lisa’s mission is to raise at least $100,000 annually to support the mission of the charity. She mainly gets support through social media drives and grant applications.

And although she isn’t employed as a full-time Computer Programmer anymore, she utilizes her knowledge in computers to help Chengeta Wildlife. She creates promotional videos, administers the website and all social media outlets, and of course, adamantly searches for more funding resources online.

Lisa’s fights are a daily struggle. She is still combating leukemia and battles poaching wars from a continent away. But every day she fights on.

Lisa’s Success is Our Story
Shawn Strong loved his Northwest Iowa Community College experience so much, it inspired him to slightly change career paths.
“I looked at the dean of the Trade and Technology Division when I was attending classes. He was always out and about, making decisions and improving the College. I thought that would be a good job to have.”

The dean of Trade and Technology that Shawn is referencing is Ron Robinson, who worked at Northwest Iowa Community College for 27 years. At the time Shawn observed Robinson, he was a Mechanical Construction Technology student at Northwest Iowa Technical College (later known as Northwest Iowa Community College) in 1993. He fondly remembers his instructors Bill Singer, Mark Bohnet and Bill Noack, and he loved the class environment.

While attending classes, Shawn got first hand technical experience by working as a Maintenance Technician at Packerland Packing in Hospers, IA. Between his lab experiences, the impact of numerous members of the NCC staff, and his time working in the field, Shawn realized that his new goal was to become someone who taught valuable skills to an emerging workforce. That meant that upon graduation from NCC, he needed to continue his education. After graduating from NCC, Shawn married Amy Sterk from Sheldon and went on to achieve bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Wayne State College. He then received his doctoral degree through Iowa State University. While getting his degrees, Shawn was continuously working. He spent time as a maintenance technician at Heritage Industries in Wayne, NE, and taught as a graduate assistant while in Ames, IA. The further he got into his education, the more convinced he was that helping others achieve a quality education was his true passion.

By Fall 1999, Shawn began a new role as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Technology and Construction Management at Missouri State University, where he taught technical courses in drafting, heating and air conditioning, and electricity. By 2004, Shawn moved into the role of Department Head of the Technology and Construction Management Department. This role was pivotal to his future success. The entire department was near closing due to low enrollment and financial struggles. Shawn built strong relationships with industry partners and began new student recruiting initiatives. Steadily the department began to flourish. Programs were doubling in size and industry partnerships were thriving. The success of turning this department around was one of his biggest accomplishments in his educational career and really sent Shawn’s ambitions skyrocketing.

“I began to think that if I was just promoted one step higher in my career, I could do great things. I just needed the resources,” states Shawn.

By 2013, Shawn took on his next challenge as the Dean of Business, Technology and Communication at Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College in Bemidji, MN. During his time there, he helped restructure and align the colleges (who had just newly merged under joint administration), assisted with the remodeling and renovation of some facilities and administered general program improvement. He stayed at this role for three years before Shawn decided that the timing was right for a new challenge.

“Three years of cold in northern Minnesota was all I could handle,” jokes Shawn.

Shawn became the President of State Technical College in Linn, MO in July 2016 and the role fits him like a glove. “I felt like a kid in the candy store,” states Shawn about assuming the President’s role. “The mission of the College, the facilities and overall atmosphere was a good fit from the start.” Shawn can see that his first alma mater has a lot of striking similarities to State Technical College. “We have a Powerline program, Heavy Equipment program and large Automotive and Health Care programs. We have around 1,400 students, with approximately 200 of them living on campus. Plus, the feeling of State Technical College reminds me of my time at NCC, especially from the faculty standpoint. The faculty at both institutions have the expertise, passion and commitment to make exceptional programs for their students,” states Shawn.

Shawn’s favorite part about his current position is enabling and encouraging others to think outside the box and expand their abilities out of their usual educational styles. “Being able to empower a faculty member to try and stretch themselves a little bit more than they think they can is truly inspiring. I love enabling our staff to go over the top.”

Between his hands-on experience in industry while he was pursuing higher education and his step-by-step growth in the academic world, he truly understands all sides of technical education. “It’s all about your ability to make an impact,” Shawn shares.

Ron Robinson had no idea that his presence back in 1993 had such a profound influence on an aspiring educational leader. Robinson passed away in 2014, but his memory is solid in Shawn. And for those who knew Robinson, there is no doubt he would have been humbled to know he was an inspiration to someone who strived to be like him.
ST. LUKE’S PARTNERSHIP

St. Luke’s College – UnityPoint Health and Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC) have announced a new articulation program. NCC students interested in transitioning to St. Luke’s College Registered Nurse (RN) and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs will receive guidance on courses that are transferable for the advanced degrees. This agreement will allow graduates of NCC’s Associate Degree Nursing program to transfer up to 78 credits of coursework to St. Luke’s College. For additional information about the articulation agreement between St. Luke’s College and NCC, please contact the Department of Admission at St. Luke’s College at (712) 279-3149, or Northwest Iowa Community College at (800) 352-4907 or visit stlukescollege.edu or nwicc.edu.

LIGHT DUTY DIESEL

The Diesel Technology program at NCC is taking a new direction! The former two-year program that also incorporated a year of automotive training is now becoming TWO stand-alone program options! The new Diesel Technology program will continue to focus on trucks, trailers, construction and agricultural equipment from manufacturers such as Caterpillar, Peterbilt, John Deere, Case IH and more. With the new curriculum, both years of this two year program will deal directly with the workings of the larger diesel-ran equipment. Additionally, NCC is adding a new Automotive and Light Duty Diesel program beginning in Fall 2017. The two year program will incorporate automotive knowledge and smaller diesel engine performance into its curriculum. This program will prepare students for employment in automotive dealerships, performance shops, fleet facilities, and owning their own automotive business.

BUSINESS DEGREE

A new Associate of Applied Science in Business program started in January 2017. The new program is designed for students who are interested in a two year program that will prepare them to enter the workforce as a manager or supervisor trainee. Students acquire a background in basic business principles including accounting, budgeting, math and economics and practical supervisory skills. Areas of emphasis include marketing, management supervision, small business management, entrepreneurship, and leadership. The program is offered in three different ways: entirely online, entirely on-campus, or as a hybrid on-campus/online option. In addition to the AAS degree option, students may focus on stacking certificates to help them earn credentials to use in advancing current job skills or in seeking future employment. Certificates are available in Management Supervision, Small Business Management, and Entrepreneurship.

OSC EOLA HALL

A fourth housing complex is under construction! Osceola Hall is projected to be open in the Fall of 2017 and will offer single bedroom suite style living. The new complex will be a 19,000 square foot building that consists of suites that will each house four students. Every suite will consist of a living room, kitchen, 2 bathrooms (each bathroom will service 2 people), and 4 individual bedrooms (students will have their own private sleeping space). In addition, Osceola Hall will have a walk out basement that will feature a Gaming Room featuring 8 gaming stations that will include 70” TV’s, along with personal computers and connections available for students to hook up personal consoles. With the addition of Osceola Hall, approximately 170 students will be able to live on-campus.
Currently, NCC has 49 of its own graduates employed at the College! Have you ever thought about coming aboard and becoming a faculty or staff member? NCC is currently hiring many positions. To view full job descriptions or apply go to bit.ly/ncc-employment

And with that, Lorena began her next degree at Northwest Iowa Community College. She went on to graduate with her degree in Practical Nursing in the Spring of 2015, and she just recently completed her Associate Degree in Nursing in December 2016.

“There were many times that I would just break down and say, ‘I’m done. I can’t do this anymore.’ And undoubtedly someone would always be there to give me encouragement. That motivation was what truly got me to where I am today,” shares Lorena. The encouragement Lorena is referring to came from multiple sources, including her NCC instructors, advisors, and her family.

“At one point, I was really at a low point. I was finding myself staying up and studying until 4 a.m., getting up at 7 a.m. to get the family ready for school and myself ready for work or classes. Money was tight, and there was always family obligations that had to be dealt with. I actually called the college to drop my classes. Word of my dropping got back to Norma Azpeitia (Bilingual Admissions Counselor at NCC), and Norma promptly called me and talked me out of it. She knew me well enough to know that I just needed to power through, and all would be OK. She was right.”

“Lorena is a warrior,” says Dawn Recher, Associate Degree Nursing Instructor at NCC. “She totally owns her life and every aspect of it. She never makes excuses. We knew that with her disposition and her drive, there is no reason she wouldn’t make an exceptional RN. She just needed the occasional word of encouragement reminding her that she has the talent.”

Lorena’s family were so excited that she completed her Associate Degree in Nursing, her mother and siblings came all the way from South Carolina to see her receive her diploma. For them, this is a momentous occasion. Lorena is the first one in her family to graduate from college. Her brother and sister, both inspired by Lorena’s success, have also completed their GED’s and are considering going on for higher education.

Lorena’s family were so excited that she completed her Associate Degree in Nursing, her mother and siblings came all the way from South Carolina to see her receive her diploma. For them, this is a momentous occasion. Lorena is the first one in her family to graduate from college. Her brother and sister, both inspired by Lorena’s success, have also completed their GED’s and are considering going on for higher education.

Lorena’s family were so excited that she completed her Associate Degree in Nursing, her mother and siblings came all the way from South Carolina to see her receive her diploma. For them, this is a momentous occasion. Lorena is the first one in her family to graduate from college. Her brother and sister, both inspired by Lorena’s success, have also completed their GED’s and are considering going on for higher education.

Lorena is now employed full-time at Sioux Center Health in the Medical-Surgical unit. And although she would love to go on to get her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree someday, at the moment she is just enjoying adjusting to her new position and being a solid role model for her kids. “It’s a priority to see my kids finish high school and college. If I can do it, they can do it,” says Lorena.

Lorena’s Success is Our Story
Enjoying this publication? Want to know more NCC news? NCC’s Alumni Office offers quarterly e-newsletters. These quick reads will keep you abreast on alumni relevant information. To make sure NCC has your e-mail address so you can get e-newsletters and other alumni relevant information, e-mail alumni@nwicc.edu or call 800-352-4907 ext. 164.

If you have any questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy, please contact the Equity Coordinators, Sandy Bruns, Northwest Iowa Community College, 603 West Park Street, Sheldon, Iowa, phone number 712-324-5061, extension 113, fax 712-324-4136; email sandry@nwicc.edu; or Beth Frankensteiner, phone number 712-324-5061, extension 242, fax 712-324-4136; email bfrankensteiner@nwicc.edu; or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 N. Wacker Dr., Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60606, phone number 312-730-1560, fax 312-730-1576.