



## LAURA MURRAY

### ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN NURSING, 2009

Laurie Murray was a paralegal and a law firm manager, but she found herself at a crossroads: either pursue law school or start something entirely new.

"I truly craved something new that offered variety," she said. "When I started being honest with myself, I realized I was bored in the legal field."

For Laurie, the moment of decision arrived when she watched the nurses take care of her daughter following multiple surgeries, and decided to pursue a health career.

She started taking her prerequisites in 2006, and a year later, she started the full-time nursing program while working as a Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA) in an intensive care unit.

One thing that impacted Laurie's success was the support from faculty.

"Nursing school was stressful, but the faculty were always considerate and thoughtful. They genuinely wanted to support all their students, and this made a huge difference in helping us get through our program."

Laurie was offered an adjunct teaching position with GBCC and became a full-time faculty member in 2016.

"I call GBCC the leapfrog. It's the place where my whole life changed, and it's been so rewarding. I knew I was ready for a change all those years ago, and it all came together."



## LICIA SCHLADENHAUFFEN

### ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN ENGLISH, 2018

On her way to becoming a valuable member of the U.S. Department of State, Licia Schladenhauffen spent part of two years at GBCC perfecting her communication skills and building that critical foundation for achievement.

Schladenhauffen, who lives in Portsmouth and works in the State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs in Boston, received her Associate Degree in English from GBCC in 2018. The college's flexibility and support helped Licia achieve this important first step in her education.

"Great Bay gave me the freedom to pursue my degree while working full time," she said. "The English Department at Great Bay offered so much support that achieving my degree in my late 20s became a reality."

She has since earned a Bachelor of Arts in English at the University of New Hampshire and will pursue a Master of Arts in Homeland Security at Northeastern University.

She said GBCC provided her with the foundation for success and she expressed fondness and appreciation for the school's role in helping her develop her skills and career path. Her time at Great Bay served as an important springboard for continuing her education at UNH and Northeastern.

While at GBCC, she gained the confidence to recognize her dreams and the ability to pursue them. This educational background helped her earn the position with the State Department.



## KRYSTAL MILLER

### ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN GENERAL STUDIES, 2006

Krystal Miller grew up in a small town and was the first in her family to attend college. She also had to navigate higher education with a learning disability.

"I had this fire in my belly to succeed. I wanted to be the best that I could be and not let a learning disability – or anything for that matter – hold me back."

Krystal decided to enroll at LRCC because it was only five minutes down the road from her parents' house.

"The professors at LRCC focused on things that were happening in the real world and related that back to what we were learning. In return, this made learning fun and interesting and easier to understand."

And, despite the challenges, Krystal graduated with honors. After earning an Associate of Science degree in General Studies, she transferred to Southern New Hampshire University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting. In 2013, she earned an MBA from SNHU.

"I can't say it enough to students who are starting out, that a community college is a great place to get your core classes under your belt while giving you real-world experience, exposure and networking. It's a wonderful place to attend college."



## JAMES HOLMES

### ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN ACCOUNTING, 2013

After 30 years out of school, Jim Holmes felt the time had come to finally pursue a college education. He decided to enroll at LRCC with a plan to later transfer to a four-year university to earn his accounting degree.

Because of the lower student-to-teacher ratio, Jim could easily participate in class discussions, ask questions and see his professors after class when a particular topic wasn't quite clicking.

"Because my professors were so accessible, I was able to pass my first few classes," he said. "This had a huge impact on my confidence level when I realized I was capable of doing the work."

Today, Jim is a residential instructor at the Farnum Rehab Center – an organization that helps individuals and families find their way to a life free of the effects of alcohol and other drugs. He also serves as an adjunct professor in the accounting program at LRCC.

"I love teaching and I love helping people. This is all possible because of the foundation LRCC helped me build when I took that first step to pursue college after 30 years of being out of the game. The education I received at LRCC was superior."

**JOEL****PICKERING****ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN HVAC SYSTEMS, 2003**

Joel Pickering was a headstrong young person and preferred to do things his own way.

"I was a bright kid, but I wasn't motivated," he said. "I barely graduated from high school and then I almost failed my first semester of college, too."

During the fall of 1998, Joel had moved to Manchester and started working as a mechanic's helper while taking courses at MCC.

"Allen Little, a professor who ran the heating program, made a big impact on me by finding a way to reach me," he said. "I went back the next semester with a fire in my belly and started doing everything that I needed to do. It was a big wake-up call."

"I had to learn that I was responsible for myself. I was responsible for my own grades and whether I would pass or fail. MCC made me feel like I belonged. I was just a local kid who needed a good environment with good people, that was embedded in the community."

In 2003, Joel graduated near the top of his class at MCC and has enjoyed a valued career in the HVAC industry.

Through it all, Joel feels that his experience at MCC shaped his path and sense of community.

**KIM****TRISCIANI****ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN HVAC SYSTEMS, 1990**

Kim Trisciani wouldn't have guessed she'd find her niche in the building trades – a field few women enter in New Hampshire and across the country.

"In high school, I thought I was going to be an accountant because I was really good at math, but the reality was that I couldn't sit still."

She pursued her Associate of Science in Business Administration from NH College (now Southern NH University), but also enrolled in the NH Plumbers & Steamfitters local union apprenticeship program to experience a more hands-on work environment.

"The apprenticeship program helped me realize that I wanted to gain advanced HVAC skills that would help me excel in the building trades. It seemed to fit my personality better and I knew I'd be successful."

When she started the HVAC certificate program at MCC in 1988, she was the only woman in the program.

Kim says community college is the perfect place to take general education classes, explore interests and branch out to meet new people or to find your niche.

"Because of the certificate program at MCC, I was able to expand my capabilities and become more marketable. That enabled me to earn more, take care of my family and improve my community."



## NICK LANGUIRAND

**ASSOCIATE OF BUSINESS IN MARKETING, 2008**

Nick Languirand's decision on where to attend college came with a few additional factors to consider.

"Since I'm disabled and also have a slight learning disability, I didn't feel that a massive campus would be the best fit for me to be successful," he said. "Ultimately, I decided to attend a NCC because I wanted to be able to get to know my professors."

While attending NCC, Nick was heavily involved in the performing arts club and in student government, serving as a student state representative, vice president and president.

This involvement with the student body and his desire to focus on wellness fostered an aspiration to be involved in his community.

"After graduation, I started taking martial arts classes. I soon realized it was more than just a hobby to get into better physical health but a way for me to give back to the community."

Nick began working with other adult students helping them learn material for their belt promotions. He also branched out to support youth in the program and deepened his community engagement.

"I would tell anyone considering attending college that going to a community college like NCC is the perfect way to get a good education in a variety of fields without having to spend a ton of money."



## LAURIE BERNA

**ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE,  
MARKETING, 1994**

Laurie Berna's story illustrates how success can be attained through second chances.

"I was a creative person and didn't like the idea of following the traditional path of enrolling into college right after high school," she said.

After a few years in the workforce, and now with a five-year-old child, Laurie knew that the time had come for her to focus – not only for her future, but her son's as well.

"I learned that NCC had a program called Project Redirection that was specifically focused on supporting single parents. It was perfect for me."

The foundation of Laurie's future was built at NCC – from her education, career, friends and ultimately a relationship with an NCC alum whom she'd eventually marry.

"When I started going to college, I finally realized my true potential. I became the student body vice president and graduated at the top of my class. I realized so much about myself during that time, and even met the love of my life at NCC."

When Laurie graduated, she began working in the Business Office where her education and can-do attitude helped her rapidly advance.

Today Laurie serves as NCC's Chief Accounting Officer and has been with the college for over 25 years.





## **HANNAH DAVIDSON**

### **ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN ENGLISH, 2004**

Hannah Davidson knew she wanted to go to college but felt limited by the lack of educational support around her. She decided to take the first step to see if college would be an option for her.

"I chose NHTI because it was affordable, accessible and I could commute to school," she said. "Most importantly, as a first-generation college student, NHTI was very supportive in helping me navigate the academic world."

Because of the intimate class size, the English Department at NHTI helped her prioritize her education and develop her confidence as a student.

"The professors saw a ton of potential in me, and through their support, I graduated with the highest GPA in the program and received scholarships to go on to a four-year college."

Hannah used her experience at NHTI as a steppingstone to earning her Bachelor of Arts in English and her Masters in Education.

"During my first year of grad school, I had this life-changing moment when I realized I wanted to blend my desire to support people with disabilities with higher education."

Serendipitously, a campus accessibility position opened at Plymouth State University, where Hannah now works to illuminate the path for others toward an education.



## **MARK CASTELLANO**

### **ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE, 1998**

Mark Castellano dreamed of becoming a police officer when he was in high school. However, he knew that departments were looking for people with full certifications.

"I decided to pursue a degree in criminal justice at NHTI," he said. "It was convenient for me because it allowed me to continue to serve as a military policeman and transfer a ton of credits from my military career."

NHTI professors with real-world experience added value by teaching beyond the textbook as they shared stories and lessons learned from the field.

"I recall that one of my professors was a retired Massachusetts State Trooper and as you can imagine, he had dozens of engaging stories to share with us. This hands down beat learning straight from a textbook and helped keep me focused."

Fast forward, Mark has been with the Department of Corrections in Concord for over 20 years, now serving as the corrections captain in the reception and diagnostics unit.

"I am grateful to NHTI and my phenomenal professors for putting me on the right career path, while also being flexible and accommodating. Because of NHTI, I can proudly say that I have a job I value."



## KEITH ENO

### ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN ADVENTURE RECREATION MANAGEMENT AND LEISURE STUDIES, 2008

Because he grew up around sports, Keith Eno started to think about becoming an athletic trainer during his senior year of high school.

His mother encouraged him to meet with Joe Perron, one of the professors in the occupational therapy department at RVCC.

"Within five minutes, he had me hooked," Keith said.

During his time at RVCC, Keith worked full time while also coaching high school basketball and track.

"It wasn't easy, but I learned to juggle it all with the time management skills I learned at RVCC."

Keith cites the influence of his teachers, like Joe, who recognized his potential and helped him grow, achieve success and develop a strong work ethic.

After graduating from RVCC, Keith was offered multiple jobs, but his professors and family suggested that he focus on furthering his education.

"I took their advice, enrolled in a four-year college and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Sports Administration from Castleton University in 2012."

Keith then began working for the Springfield Parks & Recreation Department.

Keith carried the philosophy of doing more than what's required with him after graduation and into his role in youth sports.

"I wouldn't be where I am today without my experience at RVCC."



## NICK LAROUCHE

### ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN BIOENGINEERING, 2018

Nick Larouche's higher education journey had several stops, a few shifts and a lot of encouragement. His willingness to seize opportunities and the support he received at his community college landed him a degree and a job in a high-demand field.

Nick wanted to become the first in his family to go to college. He chose to start his journey at RVCC just down the road from his home.

He enjoyed engineering courses, and seeing his interest in the sciences, a biology professor convinced him to take some biology classes, which sparked Nick's interest in biomedical engineering.

Nick shifted his goal to earning a four-year degree. He transferred to the biomedical engineering program at Great Bay Community College (GBCC) because of its agreement with the University of New Hampshire (UNH) that all community college credits would count toward a bachelor's degree in the program.

Ultimately, Nick earned an Associate of Science in Bioengineering from GBCC, a Bachelor of Science in Bioengineering from UNH and secured a job as a clinical engineer at Dartmouth College.

Nick credits several RVCC faculty and staff members for his successful journey. "I probably would not be where I am today if it weren't for the support from people at the community college."



**LEIF  
BECKER**

**ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN TEACHER  
PREPARATION, 2014**

Although he wasn't sure what career path he wanted to pursue, Leif Becker chose to take his general education classes close to home at WMCC.

"I knew I would gain a ton by starting at WMCC and staying local," he said. "The adjunct professors work in the field and choose to teach because it's a passion of theirs. This makes a huge difference for students because the professors are able to truly engage them, and they are able to better retain the material."

Leif graduated and went on to Plymouth State, enrolling initially in the teaching program and switching shortly after to political science and government. After graduating from Plymouth State, he made his way to UNH School of Law. In July 2019, he took the bar, received his results – and three days after learning he had passed, had an interview lined up.

"My hard work paid off and everything was falling into place. Shortly after my interview, I was offered a position as a litigation attorney for a Portsmouth firm."

Leif credits WMCC for shaping his path.

"WMCC gave me the foundation I needed to continue my education and did so in a high value, cost-effective way."



**JIM  
BRANNEN**

**ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN  
MID-MANAGEMENT, 1982**

After graduating high school, Jim Brannen started at a four-year college but quickly realized it wasn't right for him.

He decided to move back home to Berlin and started working full-time in the construction industry while enrolling in the mid-management program at WMCC.

"The college offered a structured education, which was exactly what I needed at the time," he said.

In addition to the structure, the personal relationships with instructors helped Jim thrive.

"The direct real-life advice on how to be successful in the workplace, not just from a technical knowledge standpoint but from life skills business acumen, professionalism and conduct were a huge benefit. WMCC taught me life lessons and how to behave to become successful."

Fast forward nearly four decades and Jim has thrived in a banking career and is now president and CEO of First Seacoast Bank. Though he became a banker by accident, Jim credits his instructors for having a profound impact on him.

"The community college was exactly the right size for me and the perfect fit, offering an education that I grade very high. My experience at WMCC opened the doors for the rest of my career!"