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Vol.I No. II

Dr. Dick Shaink:

**Leading
Mott College
to New Heights**

Jeff Snider:
A Firm
Commitment to
**Family, Faith
and Flint**

Luca's:
**Five Stars
of Culinary
Cuisine**



Dr. Dick Shaink:

Leading Mott College to New Heights

Dr. Shaink often hosts open forums on campus to allow students and staff to ask questions directly to the college president.

by Michael Kelly

Since its founding in 1923 as Flint Junior College, Mott Community College has grown to become the largest college in the Flint/Genesee County region and an institution marked by innovation, excellence and wide support in the community. Under the leadership of its current president, Dr. M. Richard Shaink (known to all as “Dick”), MCC has broken the 20,000 level in students served annually and received national recognition for its diverse career programs.

Mott College is woven into the fabric of the community it serves. Surveys reveal that more than half the households in Genesee County contain a present or former MCC student. From traditional liberal arts and college transfer to high-tech computer and simulation manufacturing, MCC offers the community over 100 different programs to prepare for successful careers and productive lives.

An example of the wide respect Mott College has earned across the nation is the fact that the Washington-based Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) named Dick Shaink as this year’s finest community college president in North

America, covering American states and territories as well as Canadian provinces and territories. The prestigious award, presented at the ACCT conference in Toronto, hailed Shaink’s guidance of the college through times of economic turbulence and demanding changes in technology.

Lenore Croudy, who chairs of the MCC Board of Trustees, said, “To have Dr. Shaink receive this national recognition from his peers by having been chosen as the top community college president/CEO in the nation and beyond is one more sign of how well Mott Community College is serving our community. As is usual for him, Dr. Shaink gave credit to the staff and faculty of the college when he accepted his award but his leadership of this college through difficult financial times and in the face of a changing economy has been an inspiration. Our community should be proud to see Dr. Shaink receive this most prestigious and well-deserved award.”

Shaink brought a unique blend of business, community, economic development and educational experience to the position of president of MCC. Unlike traditional academic leaders, Dr.



Dick Shaink and MCC's noted men's basketball coach, Steve Schmidt.

Shaink had a successful career in private business before his career in higher education. Working in a variety of fields, including industrial sales representative and production line supervisor, he rose to the post of general manager of the Meridian Mall in Okemos, Michigan, before being drawn into higher education. He began teaching an evening business class at a local community college and soon was a full-time secondary skill center teacher in addition to teaching part-time at Michigan State University and Lansing Community College.

Although he went on to attain a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from Michigan State University, Dick Shaink boasts that he is most proud of the Associate of Arts degree he earned at Jackson Community College.

The skills that made him a success in private business proved to be every bit as valuable in higher education. Soon he was executive director of the Center for Small Business and Entrepreneurial Development as well as the director of the Job Training Institute at Jackson Community College. He moved up to the post of dean of instruction at Kalamazoo Valley Community College and then vice president of Community and Economic Development at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, Nebraska.

Dick reached the college president level as president of Central Community College's Platte Campus located in Columbus, Nebraska. After several years as president of Central Community College, Dr. Shaink was selected in a highly-competitive process as president of Mott Community College.

Beginning as president of Mott Community College on March 31, 2000, his first job was MCC's finances. Just one month prior to his arrival, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools had completed its

accreditation site visit and cited several concerns focused on institutional stability and finances. Dr. Shaink's first challenge was to address these concerns. He led a successful millage campaign in 2001, winning voter approval for the first property tax millage increase since the college was established as a countywide institution in 1969 and aggressively pursued and won millions of grants from federal and state government as well as private foundations. At the same time, Dr. Shaink led a cost-cutting program through information-sharing and transparency.

With its financial house in order, MCC was able to move forward with funding, building and opening its landmark Regional Technology Center (RTC), a \$40 million high-technology educational facility that became a symbol of hope for the community. With the RTC, MCC was able to create the world's first Manufacturing Simulation Technology curriculum with support from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Mott Foundation.

To make certain that the entire community was able to access these new high-tech programs, MCC established three Community Technology Centers at various sites within the community in collaboration with groups that have not always been able to access higher education. Opening these centers in a predominately African-American neighborhood, a predominately Hispanic neighborhood and at the DisAbility Network, these centers help bridge the "digital divide" and draw otherwise excluded students into MCC main campus programs.

Knowing that economic development and job creation was the top challenge facing our area, Dick Shaink plunged into the local community to help focus resources and attract jobs. Dr. Shaink was the only individual to serve simultaneously on the boards of the

Flint Area Chamber of Commerce, the Genesee Area Focus Council and the Economic Growth Alliance, and was central to a successful merger of all three organizations into a single economic development agency, the Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce.

He assumed a wide variety of leadership positions in the local economic field. Dr. Shaink has served as chair of the Hurley Medical Center Board of Managers, chair of the Genesee Global Action Team, chair of the Genesee Global Intermodal Corridor Initiative, chair of the Public and Academic Library Network, president of the Greater Flint Education Consortium and on the boards of Automation Alley, Greater Flint Health Coalition and the Foundation for Mott Community College. He is a member of the Flint Rotary Club, the Hundred Club of Flint and many other state and national professional organizations.

The governor appointed Dr. Shaink to the Michigan Higher Education Assistance Authority where he helps develop statewide policy for higher education institutions. He also serves as co-chairman of the Education Advisory Group for the State of Michigan Workforce Development Board for Genesee and Shiawassee counties.

Of course, it is at Mott Community College where his influence is most strongly felt. Enrollment had risen nearly 30% under his leadership and Mott Community College has become even more of a “community hub” where many community activities, programs and events are convened.



William White, Dick Shaink and Representative Dale Kildee meeting in front of MCC's Regional Technology Center.

Dick Shaink is a true leader. He inspires rather than demands and his impact on the college and the community has been a powerful asset. Dick and his wife, Sally, have two grown sons, Brad and Rick, and four young grandchildren, Mark, Peri, Meghan and Bryce. Sally has also been active in the community through groups like the Humane Society.

Flint and Genesee County are fortunate to have Mott College's Dick Shaink as part of our community.