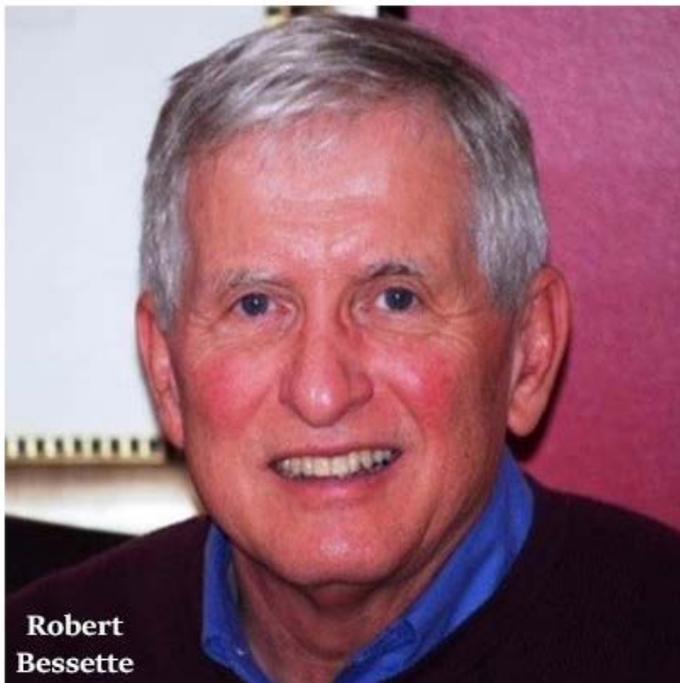




2018 LCC Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award Winner - Robert M. Bessette



In October 2015, Robert Bessette appeared in the Foundation office and told an emotional story about how a single, non-credit math class he took at LCC changed his life. Although he eventually received his Associate degree from LCC and a BA from MSU, he credits this one math class with helping him to be incredibly successful in his professional and personal lives. He came to see us because it was time for him to give back in a way that would help others. He created an endowment that is specifically structured to help students who are struggling with their math requirements. Since then, his gift has helped to imbed special instructors for TRIO and LUCERO students. Robert returns every year to see the data on the successful use of his funds. He has made a difference for some very appreciative students, some who have been able to graduate and transfer to MSU.

Robert M. Bessette was born in Lansing, Michigan, in 1942. Despite struggling with math, Bob went on to a 40-year career in the tech industry – before tech was cool. Bob credits his ability to overcome the math deficiency because of help he received from a developmental math class at LCC. He stated, “it is where things just began to click.” Click they did! Mr. Bessette went on to work in part-time shoe sales and for Aerospace Corporation, Burroughs Corporation, and founded Core Technology Corporation.

Upon graduating from Resurrection High School, Bob began taking courses at Lansing Community College in 1960. One year later, in 1961, he moved to California to work in mail services for the newly created nonprofit organization, Aerospace Corporation. Aerospace Corporation is a federally-funded research and development center providing technical advice to ensure the success of military, civil, and commercial space missions. In his two years there, he was introduced to new technologies. Mr. Bessette was called into active duty through the National Guard from 1963 to 1964 in Fort Knox, Kentucky. He remained active with the Army Reserve until 1969. In between weekends, he continued taking courses at LCC, then transferred to Michigan State University in 1965. Bob completed his Bachelor’s degree in Marketing in 1967. He also applied to receive his Associate degree the same year from LCC.

Immediately after graduation from MSU, Bessette started working as a Sales Representative for Burroughs Corporation. Burroughs Corporation is famous for its innovative adding machines, electronic display calculators, use of multiple programming languages, and the creation of the L and TC series computers. He worked his way up from Sales Rep to Sales Manager. In his 14 years with Burroughs, he climbed all the way up to Corporate Product Manager for the Health and Public sector markets.

Leaving Burroughs in 1981, he was a founding member, President, and CEO of Core Technology Corporation. He spent 20 years as the head of the organization. They provide the information sharing software for law enforcement and criminal justice agencies for searching, viewing, and exchanging data across jurisdictions. So yes, the Ingham County Sheriff does know about the speeding ticket you just received in Kent County while traveling back late from a concert in Grand Rapids. Thank you, Bob.

Core Technology’s product incorporates a range of rapid, cost-effective connectivity software, which includes: data mining, data sharing, high-speed file transfer, and cross-platform host access and terminal emulation. Essentially, it is the software that helps turn a standard sedan into a police cruiser.

Currently, Bob owns a firm that holds commercial property in the Lansing area. He has served on the Grand Ledge Historical Society, Grand Ledge Opera House Authority, Walloon Lake Country Club, and Walloon Lake Trust and Conservancy.

Through perseverance, and a little help from a developmental math class at LCC, Robert Bessette has distinguished himself in the Lansing Region. We are proud to announce him as our 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award winner.

Our People



Sarah Jean Williams

How does a first generation college student become a Grants Manager at the Michigan Department of Education? Purpose.

LCC Alumna, Sarah Williams, grew up in Charlotte. Sarah, demonstrating, academic prowess early in life, graduated high school at 17 years old. Immediately, she enrolled at LCC. She took courses for 1.5 years. However, working to put herself through school without a support network to help her navigate the intricacies of college life, contributed to her floundering in life and distracted in classes. After being unsure of her next step, she decided to put her formal education on hold.

Sarah was still Sarah – hard-working and determined. She began working in doctor’s offices around the area. After twelve years in the health care field, she found herself performing patient advocacy work. Many people in life have an “Aha!” moment. This was it for Sarah. She found a purpose: advocating for others. At age 30, she re-enrolled at LCC.

Her first role as an advocate was advocating for herself to the LCC administration. Because her previous time at LCC resulted in a GPA of less than 2.0, she had to ask for permission to



Camille R. Jensen

Pivot: a point from which something rests and then turns in order to progress forward. This is the role that LCC played in Camille Jensen’s life.

Camille worked for Michigan National Bank for nearly 10 years. She was a Security Analyst for the online division. Little did she know this would come in handy later on in life. She decided to transition into nursing from Banking and IT to be more directly involved with bettering people’s lives. She enrolled at LCC and began studying nursing. While at LCC, she was the recipient of the McLaren (formerly Ingham Regional Medical Center) Nursing Scholarship and an LCC Foundation scholarship. She became involved on campus and eventually served as the Vice President of the Student Nurses’ Association. She received her Associate Degree in Applied Science with a major in nursing in 2005. As a recipient of the McLaren Scholarship, she was favored for a nursing position there and started immediately after graduating.

Her first job with McLaren was as a bedside nurse in an intensive care step-down unit. While serving as a nurse, concentrating on patients with heart failure, diabetes, renal failure, COPD, and respiratory failure, she continued her education. In 2008, Camille

be an LCC student again. She wrote an essay and met with counselors and was successful. Knowing her purpose for being at LCC, she used every form of assistance offered on campus. She leaned heavily on the Women's Resource Center (WRC). She was awarded a \$500 WRC grant. This helped remove a barrier to access to books and study materials for her that many of LCC students still face.

Sarah transferred to Michigan State University and majored in Social Work. Again, she had to advocate for herself. MSU took her to task on being admitted. She was successful in gaining admission to the School of Social Work on a probationary status until she could prove herself. Sarah completed her undergraduate coursework and stayed at MSU, completing two Master's degrees: (1) Master of Social Work and a (2) Master of Public Health.

While at MSU she helped found and run Fostering Academics Mentoring Excellence. This program assists students both in and out of foster care. Her third key advocacy role came when she attempted to change university policy to help foster youth at MSU have available housing after the semester ends. She stated: "Most of us wouldn't even think about it. The semester ends and we go home. But where do you go if you don't have a permanent home?"

She also interned at the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). Including the 1 year internship she has now worked at MDE for five years as a School Health Consultant; she manages a grant that helps develop partnerships between health and education that focuses on increasing mental health resources and decreases mental health stigma in Michigan schools and communities. She also maintains and has strengthened relationships with some of her FAME and community partners on the Michigan Health and Education Partnership, and MDE group working to holistically support all Michigan children and families.

Sarah credits LCC as providing her entry way to Michigan State University. She stated: "As a first generation college student, you don't really have a support network to help you navigate the tangled web of resources for students that exists at a school. LCC, gave me the opportunity to learn how to navigate those support systems. Really, what I was learning was life skills." Now she helps untangle those

completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Community Development from Central Michigan University.

After completing her Bachelor's, she became the Patient Care Manager for McLaren Greater Lansing (MGL). While in this role, she was instrumental in helping MGL receive accreditation as a Stroke Center of Excellence by the Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program. She was promoted to Director of Patient Care Services. In this role, is where her former experience as an IT Analyst came in handy. Using her prior Banking and IT experience, coupled with her Project Management skills from health care leadership roles, she led the implementation of an electronic health record system. She believed, "data can be used to advance health care."

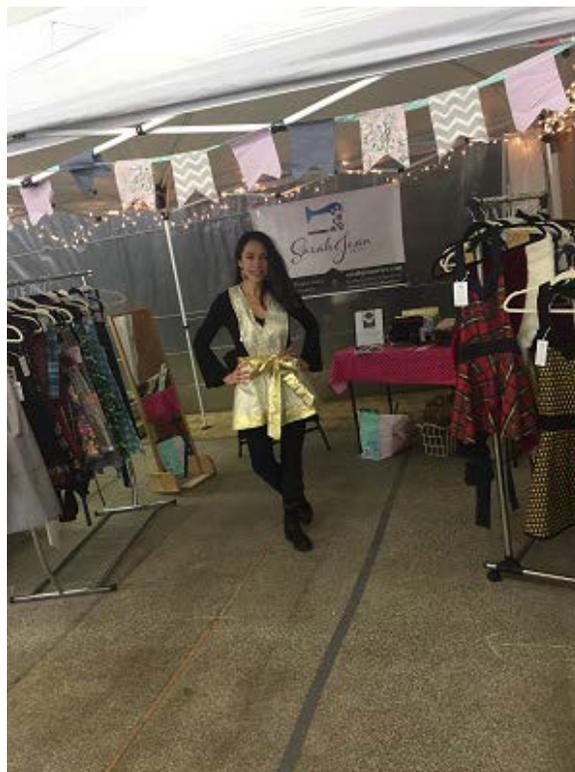
Camille completed her Master of Science degree in Nursing with a specialty in informatics; no surprise there. One year later, she was promoted to Chief Nursing Officer with MGL. The moral of this story: to move forward and be happy, sometimes you have to pivot. "I had one main goal when I decided to become a nurse; to be caring and compassionate with every patient I treated," she said. "This is the path I went down, and it has all lined up perfectly." She received a McLaren Nursing Scholarship which led her to working there. Directly improved the lives of patients as she sought to do. Now, she leads the development and training for other nurses and providers to do the same in an atmosphere she enjoys.

Camille was able to pursue her passion, continue her education, rise to the top, and work with an employer she enjoys. As if she is not busy enough, she serves on several boards: Greater Lansing Food Bank, Peppermint Creek Theatre, and the Wharton Center Advisory Council. She is also the proud mother of two. To close, here is her favorite quote: "There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." – Edith Wharton.

webs and create bridges between State and local organizations.

Sarah also credits her formal education for giving her the confidence to become an entrepreneur. In the past couple of years, she has begun SarahJean Sews, a business where she creates repurposed “sassy” aprons from thrifted materials.

While Sarah is an avid MSU supporter, she says 4-year schools are not for everyone. She believes it is the community’s job to support every student to become the best version of themselves. This could include cosmetology schools, trade schools, community colleges, or direct to a 4-year school. LCC remains a place for everyone. Whether a stepping stone to a career or to a 4-year institution.



To help us create more success stories like Camille Jensen and support students like Sarah, please donate to our [Foundation Scholarship Fund](#).

Program Highlight: Theatre



A community college is exactly that – a college for the community. A community is not a static entity. It can shrink and contrast, change in average age, ethnic diversity, and political leanings. Like a Shape Shifter from Star Trek, a community emerges from something, an origin. There are subfields of academic study devoted to exploring these phenomena. But they agree on a few key indicators of a community: a group with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings. Thus, Lansing Community College is a place that creates community, it is an origin point. Rudy Valdez is an alumnus that originates from LCC. What he gained from his experience was skill development.

Many people second guess attending a community college. But not Rudy. It was a place to develop his skills in videography and theatre. Rudy now lives in Brooklyn, New York, and is a documentary film maker and videographer who just won a major award at the Sundance Film Festival. His film has been picked up by [HBO](#) which plans to broadcast the movie later this year.

Rudy graduated from Eastern High School, attended LCC, then Michigan State University, and then moved to Brooklyn. Having a heart for family he returned home often to record the life of his nieces for their mother, Rudy's sister. She was given a 15-year sentence on federal drug charges. The film, "The Sentence" chronicles the decade-long aftermath of the conviction. The recordings of his nieces began as a simple keepsake for his sister, but blossomed to tell a larger story. "It's a very intimate film. [The film] is a microcosm of a larger national problem that we have. So it is not a Lansing-focused story, but it is a Lansing story that is emblematic of a larger system." The systematic problem brought to light in the movie is the minimum sentencing laws.

Rudy was the Director of Photography for the film, "Remembering the Artist, Robert De Niro Sr." This was an in-depth review of the accomplished impressionist's work. He also served as the Director of Photography for, "I Got Somethin' To Tell You" which is a documentary honoring Moms Mabley, a comedy pioneer. The movie was produced by Whoopi Goldberg for HBO. He has 5 projects currently in the works.

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