

# The Lumberjack Link

A Publication for Alumni and Friends of Alpena Community College

## Iron Woman: Tiffany Younk is Rebuilding Detroit

An ACC graduate's face is decorating Detroit's skyline as she makes a name for herself in an unusual arena.

Despite all the gains they have made in equality over the decades, women comprise just 2% of the 120,000 members of the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers Union, AFL-CIO (IW), in North America. Tiffany Younk ('19, '20) is one of them. An honors graduate of Alpena Community College with an associate degree in general science and a certificate in welding, Tiffany took an atypical route to end up in her atypical career for a young woman.

"I started attending ACC as a dual enrollment student when I was 16 years old," Tiffany, from Harrisville, said. "I graduated from high school with 37 college credits and Phi Theta Kappa honors and transferred to NMU. Over the course of the next six years, I switched majors and had not found anything I could see myself doing for a career."

Tiffany's educational path led her back home to ACC, which offered her the opportunity to lay a solid educational foundation on which to build her future.

"I came back to ACC when I was 24 and graduated with an associate in science (in 2019)," Tiffany said.

It was in the course of earning her degree that she realized her heart and future were forged in iron.

"I went back (again) to study welding," Tiffany said, as she explained her decision to earn a certificate in the trade after getting her associate degree. "My father is an ironworker and growing up, I always wanted to work on those jobs and go to work with him. Welding came a clear choice to go back once again and study—and I am so happy I did." After spending the preceding six years trying to figure out what to do with her life, Tiffany wasted no time in laying the foundation for her future.

"Before I graduated, I signed up with Ironworkers Local 25 out of Detroit. I graduated and almost immediately started working as an apprentice ironworker."

Living in Lapeer and commuting to Detroit every day, Tiffany is doing a lot of welding, fabricating, and working around heavy machinery.

"Currently I am working on the restoration of Michigan Central Station in Corktown in Detroit. It is a lot of fun and I am so thankful to be able to work on a building with such rich history behind it. I'm not sure how I got so lucky..." Tiffany said.

Ford Motor Company, who bought Michigan Central Station in 2018 and is restoring and renovating what was once the tallest train station in the world, recently featured Tiffany in a promotional campaign about the tradespeople working to resurrect the Detroit landmark.

"My superintendent told me one day that people would be coming to take photos of workers for a documentary and he had chosen me and a male colleague to get our photos taken. A few months later I walked outside to the front of the building and my photo was on a banner that hangs on the front of the building along with other workers from different trades."

Tiffany hopes many more female welding students at ACC follow in her footsteps and join the profession she loves.

"I have been told time and time again that women are some of the best welders," Tiffany shares. "Welding is a lot of fun and pays very well. It is an awesome career to get into, and if you like manual work that is tough but rewarding, it is an amazing career with endless opportunities!"

Like many students, Tiffany needed some time to figure out what career she wanted to pursue in life. With the help of her instructors at ACC, she forged the perfect fit for her.



*Tiffany Younk ('19, '20) - Iron Woman*

# From the Desk of the President: ACC Student Success

Student success at ACC can be measured many different ways: graduation rate, transfer success, employment upon graduation, and employment in the field of study are four factors that tell us how ACC students do. Some metrics, particularly those that capture student outcomes after they leave ACC, are mostly beyond our capacity to track. Fortunately, a database known as CEPI (Center for Educational Performance and Information) managed by the State of Michigan tracks student success data from each of Michigan's 28 community colleges. The CEPI database has been in place since 2009, offering community colleges access to a rich trove of pertinent longitudinal data.

The most recent CEPI data arrived recently. Here are a couple notable institutional highlights:



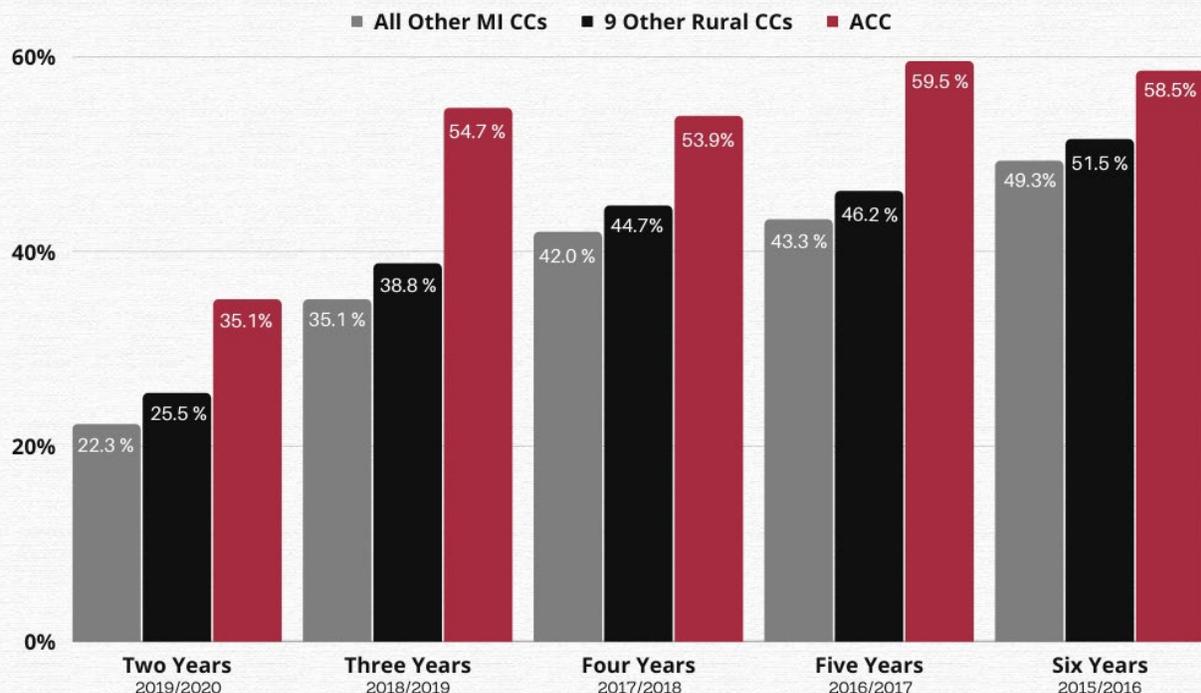
*ACC President  
Dr. Don MacMaster*

- ACC is number one in success rate among Michigan's 28 community colleges.
- The most recent postsecondary success rate of ACC students (35.1%) exceeds the cumulative success rate of the other 27 Michigan community colleges (22.3%).
- ACC maintains a comparable spread in years two, three, four, five, and six compared to the cumulative success rate of the other 27 Michigan community colleges.
- ACC's 2019-20 student success rate (35.1%) exceeds the 2019-20 average of the other nine small rural community colleges (25.1%).
- The success rate of ACC students two, three, four, five, and six years out exceeds the average of the other nine small rural community colleges by 10% in year two, 15.9% in year three, 9.2% in year four, 13.3% in year five, and 7% in year six.

ACC students, faculty, administrators, staff, ACC Board of Trustees, and ACC Foundation Board members deserve congratulations on this significant institutional accomplishment. Thanks to everyone who invests time, effort, passion, and professionalism to help ACC students succeed at these levels. Go Lumberjacks!

## MI Community Colleges Cumulative Success Rates Comparing ACC to Other MI CCs Two to Six Years After Enrollment

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE & INFORMATION (CEPI)



# Jolly Good Fellows: ACC Honors Three Remarkable Men

*Alpena Community College created the Fellow of the College award in 1972 to honor those who make outstanding educational, cultural, or economic contributions to Northeast Michigan. This year, ACC had three such worthy candidates for recognition. The 2022 Fellows of the College are James Boldrey, Dr. Elbridge Dunckel, and James Miesen.*

## James Boldrey

A 1964 graduate of Hillman High School, James Boldrey went to work with the Michigan Department of State Highways to earn money to attend college. After a semester at ACC, he went on to Eastern Michigan University, graduating in 1969 with a degree in business administration. Returning to Alpena, Jim went to work for the Reitz and LaFleche accounting firm.



*ACC Fellow James Boldrey*

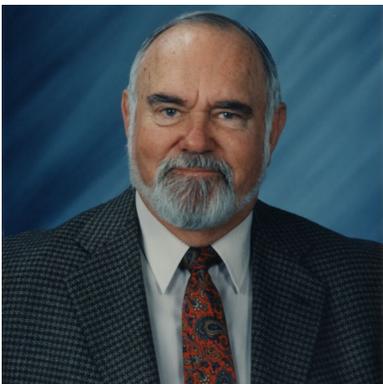
Six years later, he was made a partner and in 1985 bought the firm, where he continues to serve clients today.

Jim's dedication to Alpena Community College is evident in his 24 years of service on the ACC Foundation Board of Trustees. During that time, he participated in five major fundraising campaigns, helping to raise over \$5.2 million for ACC buildings, programs, and scholarships. Outside of ACC, Jim has served as president of the Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce, as a founding member of the Brown Trout Festival Committee, as president and a board member of the Alpena Country Club, as a member of Rotary International, and as a member of the Alpena General Hospital special prospects committee.

For his dedication to the community, commitment to increasing educational opportunities and generosity in time and talent, Jim Boldrey is a worthy Fellow of the College.

## Dr. Elbridge Dunckel

Dr. Elbridge Dunckel is remembered as playing a pivotal role in founding Alpena Community College's salmon fisheries and fish stocking program in the Thunder Bay River. During his tenure as an instructor at ACC, which started in 1964 after a career as a veterinarian, Elbridge Dunckel made a real impact on the college and on the lives of his students. He taught anatomy and the physical and biological



*ACC Fellow Dr. Elbridge Dunckel*

sciences with a unique sense of humor and a love for lecturing that made his classes popular with students and inspiring to his colleagues.

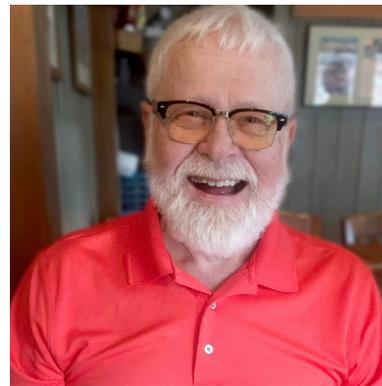
After retiring from teaching in 1992, Elbridge continued to support the college by serving as an ACC Foundation trustee from 1994 to 2002 and sitting on the board development committee.

Elbridge was an active and involved member of the greater Alpena community. He never lost touch with his fellow ACC retirees, a group affectionately called the Silverbacks, and met with them for coffee and conversation each Friday.

In July 2021, just after his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, Elbridge Dunckel passed away. His place in ACC history and his contributions to making the college a better place will never be forgotten.

## James Miesen

A Chicago native, Jim Miesen was hired as an English instructor by ACC in 1966. In the ensuing years, Jim grew to be greatly respected by his colleagues and students. Some of his many contributions to the life of the college include acting as English department chairman and being the faculty advisor for the student newspaper.



*ACC Fellow James Miesen*

Among his greatest achievements was authoring the college's 40th anniversary book, which stands to this day as the definitive history of ACC's formative years. He retired from ACC in May 1995.

Outside of work, Jim was involved in a variety of organizations, including Thunder Bay Theatre, Alpena Civic Theatre, and the Snow Drifters Club. He was also the president of the Community Concert Association.

James Miesen passed away in June 2018. His life and career left an indelible mark on ACC and he contributed greatly to the college's early successes. For those accomplishments, ACC will always be appreciative.

# Alexandra Johnson: Success You Can Take to the Bank

When she arrived at Alpena Community College after graduating from high school, Alexandra Johnson ('07) probably wouldn't have been a student you would have bet on to be a global leader at North America's largest financial institution.

"When I was in high school, I wouldn't necessarily say I was a star student, unless it came to the subjects I liked," Alexandra—Alex, to her friends—admitted. "My school guidance counselor at the time was adamant that I would not succeed in life unless I did better in my studies. I told him specifically, 'High school is boring, and I will do better in college once I can study the things that I really want to.'"

Alex got to ACC and quickly proved something many of her colleagues in the business world have discovered: never bet against her.

In recognition of her outstanding success in business and finance, Alex Johnson was named the 2022 Alpena Community College Distinguished Graduate. She received her honor May 12 at ACC's commencement ceremony.

When she began taking classes at ACC while she was still in high school, Alex thought she wanted to become a psychologist.

"...But then I started taking business courses, because someone once told me 'No matter what you study in school, always also get a degree in business.' It was one of the best pieces of advice I had ever received, and ACC was able to start me down that path."

She never looked back. Alex graduated summa cum laude from ACC in 2007 with an Associate of Arts degree in liberal

arts and received a valedictory scholarship to Michigan State University, where she earned two bachelor's degrees. Alex followed her passion to Washington D.C., where she earned a Master of Business Administration at George Washington University. Following her graduation, Ms. Johnson led brand strategy for upscale brands at Choice Hotels Inc. before transitioning to the financial services industry as a director with PayPal.

By 2019, Alex was hired by JPMorgan Chase & Company, North America's largest bank, as the global head of cross-currency payments strategy and growth. In a nutshell, what that means is that Alex and her team—with bases in Los Angeles, New York, London, and Mumbai—are responsible for finding the best way for JPMorgan Chase and its clients to exchange currency and send payments to over 120 destinations globally.

As a passionate and active supporter of a number of social justice organizations, Alex mentors several female junior colleagues and is a member of the JPMorgan *Women on the Move* initiative that champions the career advancement of women. She is eager to encourage more women and people of underrepresented communities to seek careers in banking and financial services.

As a global financial leader, Alex is in a unique position to advocate for the value of an ACC education. In embodying the ACC slogan that "something so close can take you so far," she demonstrates how the start community colleges give their students can allow them to climb all the way up the corporate ladder.

Like so many other ACC Distinguished Graduates, Alex Johnson proves that community colleges like ACC can be incubators for great leaders.



*Distinguished Graduate  
Alexandra Johnson ('07)*

## ACC Awards Front Runners

The 2022 John M. Grant Front Runner Awards were awarded to Caitlin Ison and Dan Leow during the 2022 ACC Honors Breakfast on May 12. The awards are given annually to a graduating male and female nontraditional student who has demonstrated unusual dedication in the pursuit of higher education. This award salutes "non-traditional" students who deal not only with the usual challenges of college studies, but also juggle home, family, and work responsibilities.

Both nursing students, Caitlin and Dan took time to live life before arriving at ACC to go back to school. Caitlin had to put her nursing dreams on hold after her husband's military career made staying in one place long enough to earn a degree a challenge. Now that her youngest child is in school and the family has settled in Alpena, Caitlin has been able to pursue her nursing degree. Dan, a paramedic from Rogers City, juggled a career and family as he went back to school to climb higher in the healthcare field. Both nontraditional students are prime examples of the second chance ACC gives to students when they're ready for it. Each award-winner received a \$1,000 award made possible through the ACC Foundation.



*Dan Leow & Caitlin Ison*

# Planned Giving Takes Center Stage

How would you like to be remembered? Imagine if the work you did and the passions you held could live on and benefit others after you're gone. The legacy we leave behind can say a lot about who we were.

After almost 50 years spent in their adopted hometown of Alpena, Bob and Jacquie Granum wanted to do something to make a positive, lasting impact on the small town they'd come to love. Longtime supporters of Alpena Community College and the value it brings to the surrounding community, the Granums devised a plan to support the cultural enrichment of Alpena for generations to come.

After careful consideration during their estate planning decades ago, Bob and Jacquie set up a charitable remainder unitrust, with the ACC Foundation as the beneficiary of a generous monetary gift that is now benefiting both the college and the community it serves. The terms of the trust direct that the bequest given to the ACC Foundation be used to fund programming for the theatre in the Donald L. Newport Center at ACC. To mark the couple's planned gift in 1997, ACC named the theatre after the Granums.

Now, more than 20 years after the planning of the gift, both Bob and Jacquie have passed away, but the Granum Theatre lives on, as does the Granums' legacy in the community they loved. Because of the gift the Granums bequeathed the ACC Foundation, the single largest monetary gift not made for a building project in ACC history, the

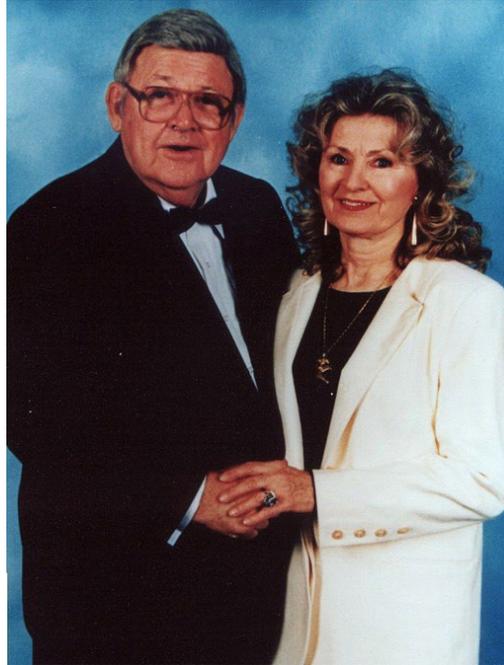
Granum Theatre will have robust programming for the community by the community.

The ACC Foundation is proud to present the Granum Grants program, an exciting opportunity for nonprofit organizations in the community to be awarded funding to hold enriching cultural events at ACC's Granum Theatre. Available to all full-time ACC faculty and staff, local school districts, churches, and federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organizations, Granum Grants enable educational programming, lectures, cultural performances, performing arts, and community-based events within the Granum Theatre at Alpena Community College. The amount of funding available will vary each year depending on investment returns, but there is no limit on the amount of funding a grant-seeker may ask for. For more information on Granum Grants, please visit [discover.alpenacc.edu](http://discover.alpenacc.edu).

As the Granum Theatre and Granum Grants show, planned giving is a way to support the things you care about and contribute something positive to the

world after you're gone. One of the most rewarding feelings we can have is knowing that we've helped someone else or enriched their lives in some way. The satisfaction that comes from making a positive impact on another person's life is a meaningful affirmation of the good that thoughtful giving does in the world. A gift of any size can have a big impact on the world you leave behind.

*For more information on including ACC in your legacy plan, contact ACC Foundation Executive Director Brenda Herman.*



*Robert & Jacquelyn Granum*

## Two ACC Graduates Win Besser Awards

Honored with the Jesse and Anna Besser Awards at ACC's 2022 Commencement were Ashley Nowicki and Musa Kabbah. The Besser Awards are the highest recognition of academic achievement given at Alpena Community College. They are conferred to two students, usually one male and one female, who have made outstanding contributions to the life of the college through scholarship, leadership, and expression of responsibility in solving social problems.

Both excellent students, Musa graduated this year with a bachelor's degree in electrical systems technology, while Ashley graduated with two associate degrees and will be transferring to Central Michigan University in the fall to pursue her goal of becoming a math teacher.

In addition to the honor of receiving this prestigious award, Musa and Ashley were each presented with a \$2,000 stipend that was funded through the ACC Foundation via a gift from Besser Company. This is the 50<sup>th</sup> year ACC students have been honored with the Jesse and Anna Besser awards.



*Ashley Nowicki, Besser's Candie Dombroski & Musa Kabbah*

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## Save the Date: ACC 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

Alpena Community College is celebrating a big birthday this fall and wants you to join the party!

*Celebrating 70 years*  
**ALPENA**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
1952-2022

The ACC Office of Alumni Relations is marking the college's 70th anniversary this fall by inviting alumni and friends of ACC to an **open house September 17 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

The college welcomes all who'd like to see the improvements and growth of ACC up close and personal. A special cake-cutting ceremony will take place in the hospitality tent at 1:00 p.m., followed by an afternoon strolling down memory lane. Doors to all campus buildings will be open, with guided tours, giveaways, and lots of reminiscing throughout the afternoon. We'll have snacks, demonstrations, historical pictures, and loads of fun.

Watch ACC's Facebook page and visit [discover.alpenacc.edu/about/70th.php](http://discover.alpenacc.edu/about/70th.php) for updates about this exciting opportunity to get an insider's look at the college. **To be eligible for a spectacular Lumberjack prize pack, RSVP to the open house now** via the QR code, below. (Just point your phone's camera at the square and a link will pop up for you to follow.)

In addition to the open house, ACC is compiling a **virtual time capsule** to preserve the memories of those who are part of the college's history and learn more about what ACC alumni have accomplished since their graduation. To participate, complete the survey by using the QR code:



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