

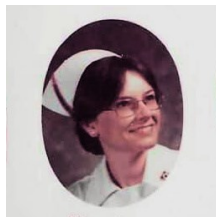
ACC News You Should Know



ACC Student
Hemker ('22) Earns
State Honors



DeRocher ('82, '85)
Named Coach of
The Year



Froelich ('75) Nurses
Love of Education



ACC Oscoda Fosters
Entrepreneurship

ACC Student Olivia Hemker ('22) Earns State Honors



Olivia Hemker ('22)

As one of five kids, Olivia Hemker ('22) is used to having to work hard to stand out in a crowd.

All her hours of studying, club meetings and activities, volunteering, playing sports, and working in a local café—along with the love and support of her large, enthusiastic family—have made Olivia the impressive young woman that she is today. And what she is today is a scholar who has earned statewide honors that have definitely made her stand out in a crowd.

The daughter of Natalie and Brent Hemker of Hale, Olivia was named a 2022 Coca-Cola Academic Team Bronze Scholar at the Phi Theta Kappa Michigan Regional Awards event held in Lansing last month and received a \$1000 scholarship. Phi Theta Kappa is an international honor society for students attending community colleges that has 31 chapters in Michigan. Olivia attended the honors event as Alpena Community College's representative on Phi Theta Kappa's All-Michigan Academic Team, which recognizes the top students from Michigan's community colleges.

Accompanied by ACC Dean of Students Nancy Seguin, ACC Director of Housing Cindy DeRocher, along with ACC President Dr. Don MacMaster and his wife, Dr. Tina Rossi, Olivia was not aware when she traveled to the awards ceremony in Lansing last month that she would be honored with such a prestigious award.

"I was very surprised, actually," Olivia shared. "It was super exciting and I thought the best part was how surprised and honored Dr. MacMaster was that one of his students was awarded this honor."

Hemker was nominated by ACC based on her academic achievement, community service involvement, and leadership. To be eligible to be inducted into Phi Theta Kappa, students must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher and have completed at least 12 hours of coursework towards an associate or bachelor's degree or 6 hours of coursework toward a 1-year certificate.

The 2021 Tawas Area High School valedictorian, Olivia is finishing up her thirteenth year in the ACC Early College program and will graduate in May with highest honors from both Tawas Area High School and Alpena Community College. While Olivia could have likely gone off to a four-year school right away and succeeded, the savings on tuition was a major factor in her family's decision to enroll Olivia in the ACC Early College Program.

"I am one of five kids and it is definitely not easy financially to put us all through college," Olivia explained. "So (my parents) decided those of us that could would join the (early college) program, because not only do you get college-class-level work in high school, but you are also sponsored and basically get your associate for free."

She is currently a biochemistry major in the pre-medicine program at ACC and will transfer this fall to the University of Michigan, the alma mater of several family members.

"I chose U of M because of the level of academics and also the environment it provides for its students—along with some family influence," Olivia laughed. "My dad attended

(U of M) as well as my grandma, uncle, and cousin.”

Before heading off to Ann Arbor in the next step to reach her goal of becoming a pediatrician or physician assistant specializing in pediatrics, Olivia will savor her last weeks as a Lumberjack. She has enjoyed her time at the college and thinks highly of the education she earned at ACC.

“I have had a very good experience here at ACC. I didn't really know what to expect...but I can confidently say that it has been incredible attending classes here,” Olivia enthused. “From watching my siblings go through other community colleges and having issues with the classes being too simple or not geared towards younger groups, I think ACC has done a really good job with creating a quality education with a goal-oriented support system for its students.”

Olivia is headed to a campus of 45,000 people, but we have no doubt this Lumberjack for Life will once again stand out in the crowd.



Olivia stands with Dr. MacMaster at the state PTK awards.

ACC Alumna & Coach of the Year Cindy DeRocher ('82, '85')



Coach Cindy DeRocher

Some people dribble through life, while others pull up for the big shot over and over again. Cindy DeRocher ('82, '85) falls into the latter category.

Named last month as the 2022 women's basketball coach of the year by the Michigan Community College Athletic Association Eastern Conference, Cindy coached the Alpena Community College women's team this season to their most successful record in recent memory, going 13-14 and making the district playoffs.

Her success in her first year as head coach should surprise no one, however. Cindy DeRocher is used to winning.

As a talented player on the Alcona High School girls' teams of the last 70s, Cindy and her team made it to the final four of the girls' basketball state championship during Cindy's senior season in 1979. She went on to play for legendary head coach Frank McCourt at ACC, where her teams won 37 games and lost 17 during her two seasons.

In 1988, Cindy started a career as the women's head basketball coach at Trine University in Angola, Indiana. Over twelve seasons, Cindy built a fearsome team, which played in the finals of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics tournament four times. She won coach of the year titles in 1997 and 1999, as well as the Women's Basketball Coaches Association/NAIA Coach of the Year in 1997. In 2003, Cindy was inducted into the Trine University Athletic Hall of Fame and in 2018, Cindy was welcomed into the Alpena Sports Hall of Fame.

The pull of family eventually led Cindy back home to Northeast Michigan and she became the ACC Director of Student Life & Campus Housing, as well as ACC's athletic director. Unable to stay away from the hardcourt for long, Cindy took on assistant coaching duties for the women's basketball team at ACC in 2020. After just a year, Cindy stepped up into the head coaching position after former coach Bobby Allen moved over to lead the men's team. Cindy built on the success of the previous season and put in an award-winning coaching effort.

In speaking about the honor, Cindy gave her team all the credit.

“This award is reflective of our team's mindset to set goals higher than expectations, and working hard every day to achieve them,” DeRocher said.

While her team's hard work paid off on the court, it was Cindy who led them. Among the admirers of her coaching is another former Alcona Tigers basketball player, ACC

President Don MacMaster.

“Coach DeRocher deserves great credit for assembling this team and leading them to such an influential season. Both the team and Coach DeRocher made ACC proud,” Dr. MacMaster said.

In addition to DeRocher being named the conference’s top coach, players on both the Lumberjacks men’s and women’s basketball teams received MCAA Eastern Conference honors, including:

- Jade Schultz, Second Team All-Conference
- Allison DeRocher, Honorable Mention All-Conference
- Chris DeRocher, Honorable Mention All-Conference
- Mollie Girard, Honorable Mention All-Conference
- Quay Humphries, Honorable Mention All-Conference
- James Williams, Honorable Mention All-Conference, All-Freshman Team

Shari Froelich ('75): Nursing a Love of Education



Dr. Shari Froelich

With a doctorate, multiple master’s degrees, a bachelor’s degree, an associate degree, and various certificates, alumna Shari McHarg Froelich ('75) DNP, MSN, MSBA, ANP, BC, ACHPN, PMHNP, BC must have to ice her hand after signing her name. As a nurse of over 45 years, however, she likely can take care of the pain.

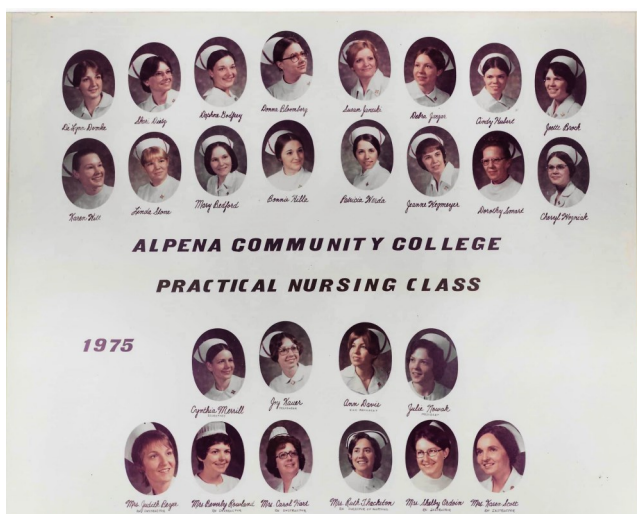
Having just retired, Dr. Froelich has found herself looking back on her long, diverse career in nursing, which began right here at Alpena Community College. She recently rediscovered a picture of her classmates from the class of 1975 and can’t help but think of the women who studied alongside her at a time when nursing was very different than it is today.

The Alpena Community College practical nursing class of 1975, to which Shari belongs, graduated 20 LPNs that semester. They were only the third nursing cohort to graduate from ACC’s relatively new LPN program, which was rigorous and highly competitive. While she’s kept in touch with a few of her classmates, Dr. Froelich would like to reunite with the rest. She recently posted the 1975 ACC practical nursing class photo composite on Facebook, enlisting the public’s help to track down her classmates.

ACC’s Office of Alumni Relations reached out to Dr. Froelich to see if the college could assist her in reuniting the nursing class of 1975 and discovered there’s a lot about her for her classmates to catch up on. After graduating from ACC, Dr. Froelich went on to earn a BS in nursing; master’s degrees in nursing administration, business administration, healthcare business, adult primary care, and palliative care nurse practitioner; not to mention a doctorate in nursing practice. If that weren’t enough, Dr. Froelich also earned a post-master’s certificate in psychiatric mental health. (Clearly this is a woman who understands the value of education.)

With a career that demonstrates how versatile a field the profession has become, Dr. Froelich has worked at all levels of nursing—from bedside care to administrative work and everything in between—in a multitude of specialties, including psychiatric and behavioral health, pain management, palliative and hospice care, education, breast health, wound care, and case management, just to name a few.

“I landed in a pot of gold,” Dr. Froelich says of her decision to



pursue nursing. “It has allowed me to change my focus to so many things without leaving nursing.”

Education was the key to Dr. Froelich’s career trajectory—and it all started in Van Lare Hall in 1974. Anyone who’s worked their way through Alpena Community College’s nursing program will tell you that the bonds they forge with their classmates are strong, in large part due to the fact that student go through their program in cohorts, which become more like family as they progress through classes and clinical practica together.

We want to reunite one of our first few cohorts of nurses by reuniting the class of 1975. Please take a look at the composite and reach out to [Director of Alumni Relations Mary Eagan](#) with any information you may have about how to get in touch with the women listed.

ACC Oscoda Campus Fosters Entrepreneurship



Dr. Marvin Pichla

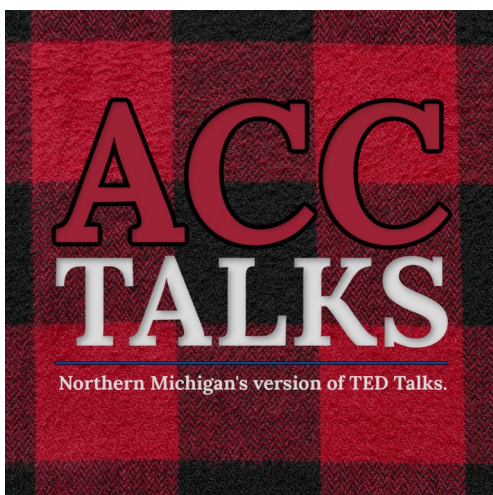
As a community college, ACC takes its role in educating the community seriously. Alpena Community College’s Oscoda campus is distinguishing itself as a place that thinks outside the box in educating the community. That innovation is creating excitement and new possibilities, especially when it comes to revitalizing business in the area.

A series of free presentations, which lately have featured topics surrounding job creation and business, is inspiring both students and community members alike. *ACC Talks*, the brainchild of ACC Oscoda Director Dr. Marv Pichla, is like TED Talks for Northeast

Michigan. These presentations feature experts in their fields teaching the community about practical concepts that spark creativity in those seeking to build or capitalize on a better business climate in the area.

The last *ACC Talks* event brought ACC together with entrepreneurship and economic development experts from Central Michigan University and Michigan State University to talk about how new ways of doing business are vital to small business success. Mary ZumBrunnen, from the Center for Community and Economic Development at MSU, and Julie Messing, from the Isabella Bank Institute for Entrepreneurship at CMU, both offered advice about entrepreneurship and shared resources available to students and small business owners with big ideas.

With over 30 years of experience in workforce development and problem-solving for businesses during his time as the executive director of Thumb Area Michigan Works! agency, Dr. Pichla is uniquely positioned to help pump new energy into the business community in Northeast Michigan by fostering entrepreneurship on the Oscoda campus, which will spill over into the surrounding community. To that aim, Dr. Pichla has more TED Talks planned for the future, as well as other campus events and projects that he’s keeping close to the vest for now.



One thing Dr. Pichla is letting us in on, however, is his blog and podcast, which you can find on his [website](#). Dr. Pichla offers his down-to-earth wisdom and advice on a variety of business and life topics.

If you’re interested in *ACC Talks*, keep your eye on the [ACC Facebook](#) and [Instagram pages](#) for future topics and dates.