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ACC FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2013 DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE

The 2013 Distinguished Graduate Award was presented at the 60th Alpena Community College commencement ceremonies on May 9 to Jerry Murrell, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Five Guys Burgers and Fries.

The Distinguished Graduate Award was established in 1998 by the ACC Foundation to honor ACC graduates who have gone on to contribute to society through successful careers. Its recipients are examples of how a solid foundation from ACC can launch a lifetime of achievements.

Murrell was raised in Alpena and a graduate of Catholic Central High School. He earned an Associate of Arts degree from ACC in 1964. In 1967 Murrell earned a degree in economics from the University of Michigan and began working for a life insurance company. In the 1970's Murrell married and moved to Washington D.C. with his three sons to start his own financial planning business. He later remarried in 1981 and he and his wife, Janie had two more sons.

Murrell offered his two older sons a proposition as they were nearing the end of high school. They could go to college or use the education money that had been saved to start a business. Together, the family agreed to use the funds that had been set aside for education to open a burger restaurant. Murrell utilized his business savvy and formulated the plan, which included the name Five Guys. In 1986 the Murrells opened their first take-out burger restaurant in Arlington, Virginia.

For 16 years the Murrells ran five restaurants in the metro Washington D.C. area and perfected their system. Their business philosophy was simple, use quality ingredients, cook everything fresh and made to order. The menu was limited, hand-formed burgers with unlimited free toppings, and fresh-cut fries cooked in peanut oil. Five Guys Burgers became a phenomenon with a cult-like following among burger lovers.

In 2003, Jerry's son, the "five guys" convinced him to franchise and after 18 months, Five Guys Enterprises sold options for over 300 units and the success of franchising a local restaurant made national news. Murrell has become the king of burgers, selling 2.2 million burgers a week at more than 1,100 restaurants in the United States and Canada and locations planned for Great Britain.

Penny Boldrey, Executive Director of the Foundation said, "The ACC Foundation is proud to award the 2013 Distinguished Graduate Award to Jerry for his remarkable achievements and outstanding accomplishments since his early days at ACC."