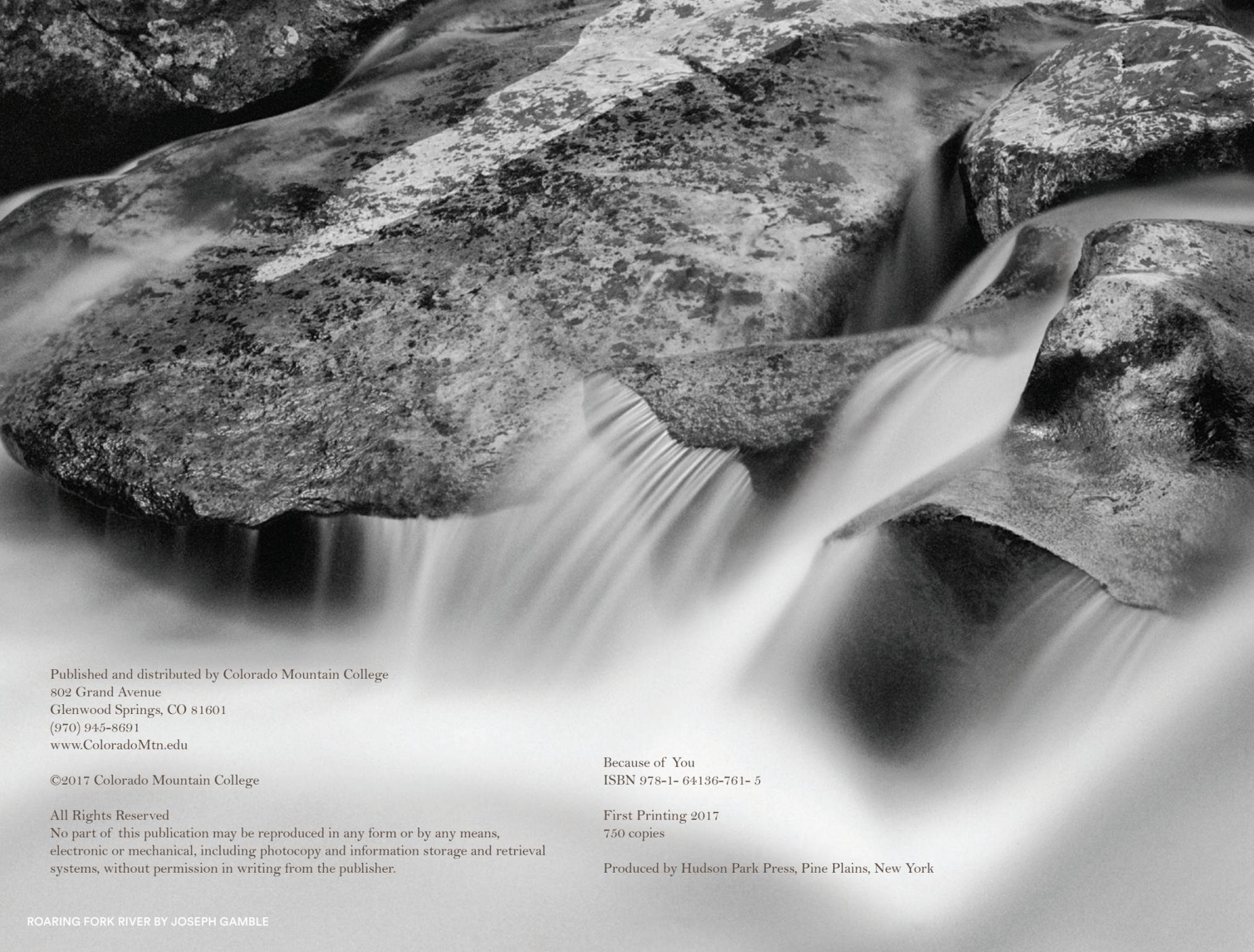


# Because of You.

The **story** of Colorado Mountain College  
50th ANNIVERSARY | 1967–2017



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Because of You...

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## Foreword

Years ago, the noted Western writer Wallace Stegner coined the phrase “a society to match the scenery” to encapsulate his hopes for the American West. And then, even as that phrase remained widely quoted, he declared that those hopes had diminished over time, and he had come to see the phrase as unrealistic.

Here is the value and power of this book: if you direct your attention to Colorado Mountain College, the hope packed into Mr Stegner’s six-word vision gets refreshed and replenished. The wording might have to surrender some of its trim and shapely quality, but “an institution to match the scenery while enhancing the lives and expanding the opportunities of more than 500,000 young Westerners” offers a story that knocks the pins out from under disillusionment and despair.

“...a story that knocks the pins out from under disillusionment and despair.”

I was not exactly an “early adopter” of this recognition. Driving in Western Colorado, I frequently saw signs that said “Colorado Mountain College.” Burdened as I was with a conventional understanding of the word “college,” those sightings left me befuddled: How was it that this particular college had been set free of the usual constraints of space and time, and kept appearing wherever I went?

Of all the familiar platitudes available to guide us in a dynamic world, “better late than never” is one of the most useful. In August of 2014, a lucky invitation to speak at the Rifle Center of Colorado Mountain College permitted me to recover from ignorance. During that visit, I had the good fortune to spend time with Carrie Besnette Hauser, the current President of Colorado Mountain College. A person for whom the words “smart,” “bright,” and “very attuned to the world around her” can only serve as understatement, President Hauser surely must have recognized how little I knew of the organization she leads. And, with grace and without condescension, she brought me up to speed.

And then, to guarantee that the spirit-lifting message of Colorado Mountain College’s history will always occupy a central place in my memory, President Hauser arranged for me to visit with the College’s founder David Delaplaine. Back in the mid-1960s, Mr. Delaplaine had contemplated the distance separating the homes of many young people on the Western Slope from accessible institutions of higher education. Seeking a better arrangement of the location of talented young people and the location of the classrooms that could cultivate that talent and mobilize it for humanity’s benefit, Mr. Delaplaine launched the enterprise that brought Colorado Mountain College into being. Needless to say, this was not the achievement of a solitary individual; hundreds of other good souls put their shoulders to this wheel and



Patty Limerick, PhD, Colorado State Historian  
Photo: Casey A. Cass/University of Colorado

did their part to create an institution that now offers fifty-four associate degrees, seventy-seven certificate programs, and five bachelor degrees at campuses located in many areas of north-central Colorado. Indeed, with

eleven CMC campuses in operation, there was some evidentiary basis to support my earlier impression that this unusual institution of higher education exists in an almost magical state of geographical omnipresence.

If you are interested in reading a story that will confirm or restore your faith in the ability—and the willingness—of your fellow citizens to size up a problem with honesty and insight, and to craft an innovative and lasting solution, you have surely found the right book. Become acquainted with the origins, the current vigor, and the still-to-be-imagined future achievements of Colorado Mountain College, and you will be positioned to draw on the power of Mr. Delaplaine’s observation: “It’s really surprising, isn’t it, how you take one step at a time?” This book charts the route laid out by those steps—not always leading to instant success but always powered by persistence—arriving at a stunning destination: a wondrous network of minds, ideas, skills, and aspirations, with students, teachers, administrators, graduates, contributors, and fans drawn together into a common cause: the inter-connected well-being of the human communities and the natural settings of an extraordinary part of the planet.

– Patty Limerick, PhD  
Faculty Director and Chair of the Board of the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado, and Colorado State Historian



## Introduction

This is the story of how a bold idea became a college. Visionaries in two towns in the central Rocky Mountains of Colorado conceived of the idea. They saw a need for an institution of higher education where none existed. Thanks to their vision and their persistence, Colorado Mountain College was born.

Now, 50 years later, their great idea has touched thousands of lives, and enriched dozens of communities across the Continental Divide. As one of the largest small colleges in the nation, CMC has remained independent, reflecting the dynamic mountain environment and its entrepreneurial communities.

My own involvement with the college began in 1988 when I moved to Glenwood Springs to work for the local newspaper. As a reporter covering CMC stories, as a student and as an instructor, I was drawn into the CMC family. My first class was the Proffoff Intensive Journal, taught by Neva Daniel. The class helped change the direction of my life and resulted in a wonderful friendship with Neva.

As I taught anthropology and archeology classes at CMC for several years, my greatest satisfaction was sparking students’ curiosity about tribal cultures.

When I was offered the opportunity to write a history of Colorado Mountain College, I jumped at the chance to tell its compelling story. After all, I had history with CMC. For me, the heart of the narrative is the people who have shaped CMC. They were the pioneers, more like Star Trek astronauts than homesteaders, going so boldly where none had gone before.

The concept of Colorado Mountain College began in the early 1960s when members of the chambers of commerce in Glenwood Springs and Leadville, recognized the need for higher education in central Colorado. Each chamber realized that a college was essential to keep their communities economically sound.

Both groups met and agreed to explore the idea of creating a community college to serve this large rural region. The first challenge was to convince voters to raise their property taxes to fund the new college. It was a hard sell. The plan was to have two campuses, one in Glenwood Springs and one in Leadville. Some communities questioned why they should support a new taxing district if they would not have a campus. But in 1965, voters overwhelmingly supported the formation of the college district.

Fundamental to that early vision was the intent to provide learning opportunities for adult students. Enrollment for continuing education grew dramatically as the college evolved.

This year, 2017, CMC celebrated its 50th anniversary. It has remained true to its roots, continuing to elevate the vitality of this part of the Rocky Mountains and beyond.

– Donna Gray  
Author, *Because of You*

## Editor’s Reflections

The evening snowstorm was deepening as Walter Gallacher, then CMC marketing director, and I left the campus in Leadville, headed for Denver. By the time we were a mile out of town on state highway 91 toward Fremont Pass, it had become an all-out blizzard. The road and everything else had disappeared into swirling whiteness. No tracks in front of us. Only the roadside reflectors to our right told us we were still on pavement. We considered turning around, but the whiteout was so intense that we were invisible to oncoming cars. So, I tightened my grip, leaned into the windshield, and drove reflector-to-reflector toward the Divide at the summit of the pass. After 2 ½ hours we arrived at Copper Mountain and the storm eased. Alone on ice-glazed I-70, we drove gingerly past spun-out, tumbled and abandoned cars on either side of both lanes, before stopping in Frisco for the night.

The next morning in Frisco was the kind that causes mountain dwellers to rejoice—bluebird above and deep white all around. The sun soon melted the frozen lanes and we continued on to our meetings in Denver.

As I’ve worked on this book, I’ve often thought about that trip, and how it symbolizes the work and history of Colorado Mountain College. The mountainous environment constantly presents barriers to making higher education accessible across 12,000 square miles of terrain, split by the Continental Divide. Many CMC employees have stories about traveling between campuses in adverse conditions (including the Central Services staff member whose van was destroyed by a rock fall as she drove a group through Glenwood Canyon to a campus meeting).

From the beginning, Colorado Mountain College has been guided by the type of people who make their own tracks, pressing forward into challenges without precedent. Sometimes the early founders and builders of the college could only see the next task in front of them, but they stayed committed, improvising as needed. They knew the goal was worth the perseverance. Now, as we pass the 50-year mark, those early storms have mostly cleared. The sun is overhead, and the way seems bright toward accomplishing an ever-strengthening vision.

I’m deeply honored to help tell the Colorado Mountain College story, and to give tribute to the many who have stayed the course in hard times and committed entire careers so that the residents of this region could flourish through education.

I hope that by reading this history, your gratitude will increase, both for this unparalleled institution and for those who have created it. While sorting through countless newsletters, yearbooks, documents and photos, I have realized that for every student, faculty or staff member featured here, there are hundreds more who are not. The Colorado Mountain College story is much too large to fit between these two covers, and the story continues to grow. I hope you will be a part of the next chapter.

– Doug Stewart, CMC Director of Marketing and Communications  
Editor, *Because of You*



Summit County Flowers by John Fielder

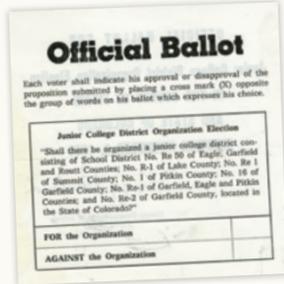
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It takes a village to produce a book.

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“You know, what we really ought to have here in this part of the country is a college.”

– David Delaplane

## It Started with a Folder

It all started with an almost-empty file folder. The folder lay on the desk of David Delaplane, manager of the Glenwood Springs Chamber of Commerce. The year was 1962. Delaplane was pastor of a small local church, and had just taken on the manager's job at the chamber to supplement his income. He was diligently following up on the chamber's various committees to get a handle on the work of the organization. He opened the folder and saw a slip of paper with a list of names, titled “Education Committee.” He was puzzled. What was this committee all about? What was its charge? Judging by the scant contents of the folder, probably not much at that time.

He wondered what the committee could do that would be helpful. Then he thought, “You know, what we really ought to have here in this part of the country is a college.”

He called the education committee together. They were a group of local businessmen: John Samuelson,

owner and publisher of the daily newspapers, the Glenwood Springs Post and the Sage Reminder; Don Stewart, a dentist; motel owner Don Walter; Walter Coleman, the local Coors beer distributor; and Roger Henderson, an insurance and real estate agent.

Delaplane put his question to the group. What did they think about starting a college? They liked the idea, but wondered if it was possible. They were willing to give it a go. “Thinking about starting anything, I suppose, no creation begins without a thought,” Delaplane told an interviewer in 2011. “And that always has intrigued me that you have a thought and then something as major as Colorado Mountain College comes out of that.”

He contacted the state board of education to ask about the requirements for forming what was at that time called a junior college, in Glenwood Springs. In order to win approval, the city would need to have at least 400 graduating high school seniors annually, and





John Samuelson, owner and publisher of the daily newspapers, the Glenwood Springs Post and the Sage Reminder. Photo: Glenwood Springs Post Independent

an assessed valuation of property of at least \$60 million. The committee quickly realized that Glenwood Springs alone could not meet those criteria. What if they included Aspen in a junior college district? But no, between them the two towns could not meet the necessary number of graduates. Then they looked east, all the way to Leadville.

The germ of a similar idea was growing in the minds of an education committee at the Leadville Chamber of Commerce, a group that included Don Stephens, William French, Robert Zaitz, Dr. Nels Sullivan, Pat Harvey, Jack East, and James Higday.

### A similar idea was growing...at the Leadville Chamber of Commerce.

Leadville citizens had their own reasons for wanting a college in town. The Climax Mine sits high up above Leadville at 11,360 feet, and during peak production, was the largest molybdenum mine in the world. It produced three-quarters of the metal in the U.S., a metal which is used to harden steel. In the 1960s, over 3,000 people were employed there. It was the economic backbone of Leadville.

The managers of the mine pushed strongly for a junior college that could provide employee training in mining technology and other related skills. The sprawling mine exceeded the required

assessed valuation for a junior college district. It had pull. Delaplane arranged a meeting of the two education committees to explore the idea. Leadville was in favor of going forward, but only if the town had its own campus.

With the eastern and western hubs of what was beginning to form as a college district, the counties in between had to be included to fulfill the requirement that the district be comprised of contiguous counties. Between Leadville in Lake County and

Glenwood Springs in Garfield County were three others: Summit, Eagle, and Pitkin counties. Lucile Bogue had already opened a private liberal arts school, Yampa Valley College in Steamboat Springs, thus Routt County was out of consideration. So the courtship began. Besides having to meet the state requirements of graduating seniors and tax base, the voters in each of the five counties had to approve the district, and agree to increase their property taxes to fund it.

“We traveled along those mountain roads, from Glenwood to Aspen to Eagle to Leadville to Breckenridge, day and night, meeting with any little group we could with our little slideshow,” Delaplane said.

The National Association of Junior Colleges had helpfully sent him a slideshow with an audio track that outlined what such a community college would look like. It explained that the college would offer basic academic courses to students who intended to transfer to a four-year college. The school would also offer two-year associate degrees or certifications for those wanting to enter their local workforce or employees wanting to hone their skills. Ranching families would be able to keep their kids close another two years before sending them for an agricultural degree at Colorado State University.

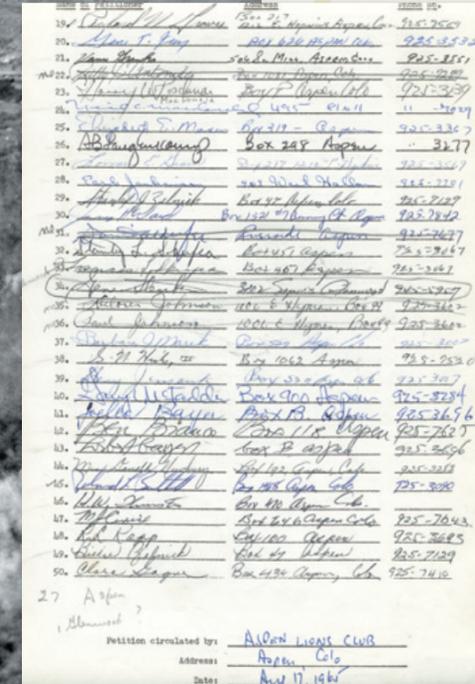
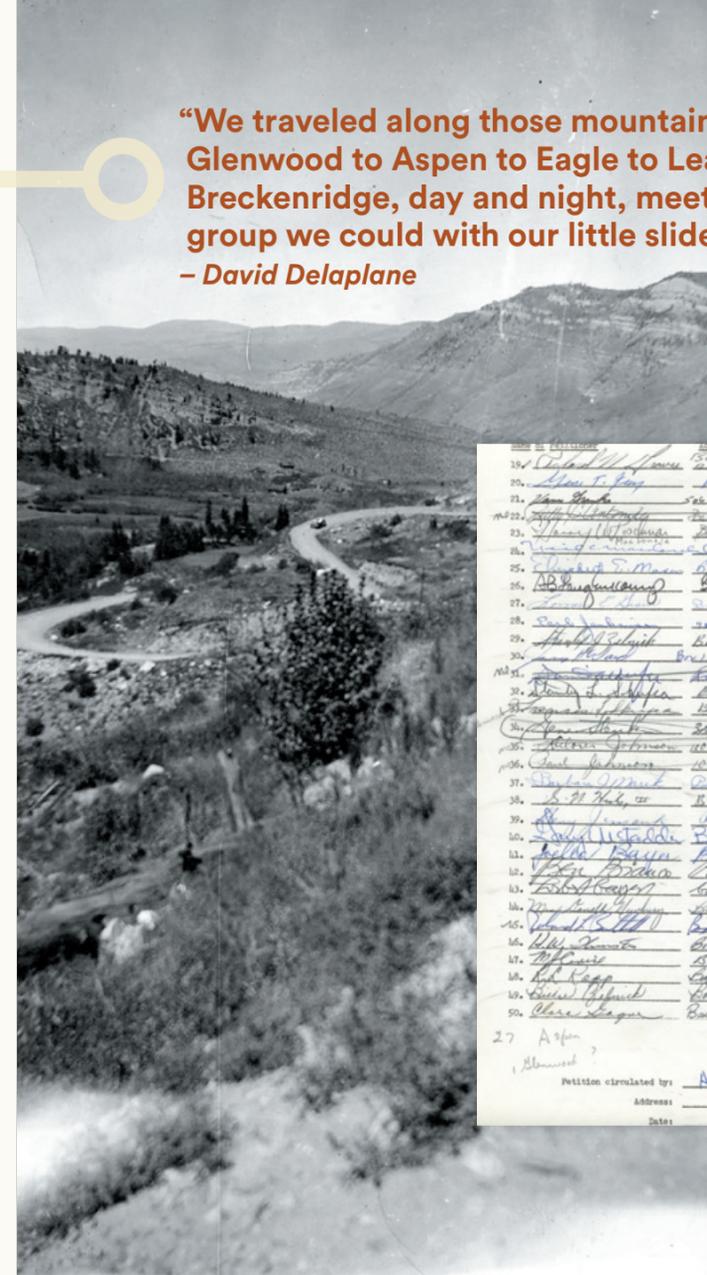
That simple vision of a junior college in the central Rocky Mountains of Colorado began to take shape. The early visionaries serving on their respective education committees asked themselves what kind of students they wanted to attract. Delaplane spelled it out. They wanted “our own people,” he said, kids who lived in the communities in the five counties. Besides the two largest towns, Leadville and Glenwood Springs, there were a handful of small, rural mountain towns. It was for the kids of all those towns, whose parents may not have had the resources to send them to a four-year college. For those high school graduates who weren’t looking to pursue a college degree, a local college could give them first-class training for jobs in their hometown.



Main Street Minturn, 1957. Photo courtesy of Eagle County Historical Society, Eagle Valley Library District

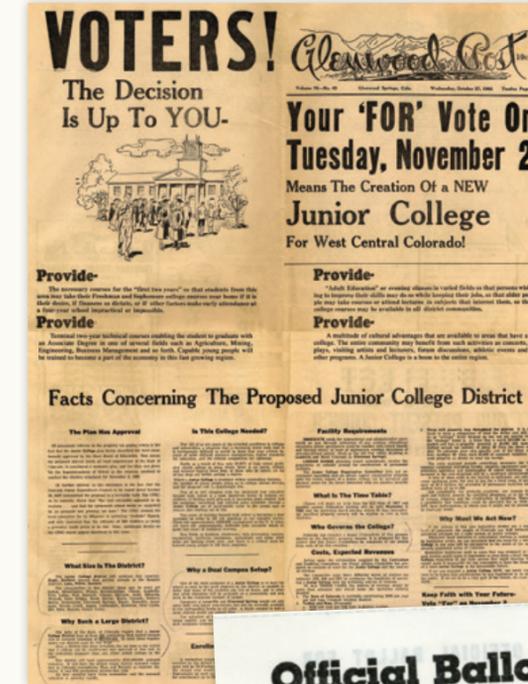
### “We traveled along those mountain roads, from Glenwood to Aspen to Eagle to Leadville to Breckenridge, day and night, meeting with any little group we could with our little slideshow.”

– David Delaplane



After a successful petition to the state board signed by the voters in the five counties of the prospective district, the date was set for November 2, 1965, for an official vote.

The group traveled from town to town between Leadville and Glenwood Springs—a distance of about 90 miles—speaking to county commissioners and PTAs and people in their living rooms. Photo courtesy of Eagle County Historical Society, Eagle Valley Library District



As the group traveled from town to town between Leadville and Glenwood Springs—a distance of about 90 miles—speaking to county commissioners and parent-teacher associations and people in their living rooms, it soon became apparent that the notion of a college would be a hard sell. While most towns were welcoming and interested, others were not. And although the interest, and even support, was often there, questions remained about cost. People wanted to know how much extra property tax they would have to pay.

Brian Hoza, who later had a career as dean of student affairs at CMC Steamboat Springs, recalled attending an information session with his parents who owned a local pharmacy: “I was there for one of those original chats in a living room in Eagle. When I was a kid, I remember our family going over to Harold Koonce’s house. They had coffee and they had dessert, and the kids were trying to stay out of trouble, while this group of folks were talking about the college.”

The hardest sell was in Eagle and Breckenridge. Neither would have a college campus immediately, but because they were within the college district, they would have to pay the extra tax just the same. The committee countered that if parents sent their kids to either the Leadville or Glenwood Springs campuses, they would be paying a tuition rate much lower than any other state junior college, including Mesa Junior College in Grand Junction.



## NEVA DANIEL

*First Faculty*

In 1966, Neva Daniel was the first faculty member hired at the newly minted CMC. "I heard about an innovative new college being started with two campuses—one in Leadville and one in Glenwood Springs," she wrote in a memoir about her years at CMC. "I thought it would be exciting to be a part of a new college that was yet to be built."

The following year she and her husband Norvell and daughter Sharon moved to Leadville. The town had played an important part in her family's history. One of her grandfather's cousins was none other than John Routt, the first governor of Colorado Territory, as well as the seventh governor of the state and mayor of Denver. Routt had struck it rich during the mining boom in the late 1800s with his two mines, the Morning Star and the Evening Star.

Neva thought she would follow in her ancestor's pioneering footsteps, this time in education.

"The community was so excited to have this new college in their midst," she recalled. Every class taught during the day was also taught at night to the miners and engineers from Climax Molybdenum.

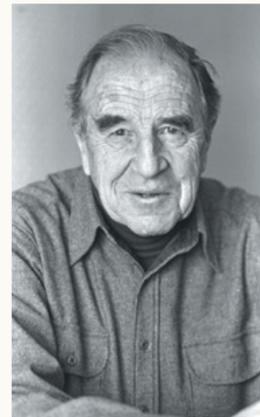
At the end of the year, Daniel transferred to Glenwood Springs. She continued to teach literature and incorporated the Progoff Intensive Journal method of life exploration into her classes. She and her students explored the great characters in literature as they probed their own life histories. Daniel described it as "revealing and deeply satisfying."

After retiring from CMC when she was 70, Daniel continued to offer Progoff workshops until she was 85. Martha Cochran, director of the Glenwood Springs Center at the time, remembered hearing about the journaling workshops. "Time after time people would come in and say, 'Oh, thank you. That changed my life.'"

"She was so sweet," said Cochran. "We'd just do whatever she wanted. Whenever she wanted to teach, whatever she wanted to teach, we just worked it out for Neva. She had a huge following."



The governing committee and guest advisers, January 1966. Counterclockwise from top: David Delaplaine (wearing glasses), Howard Clark (Summit County), David Barbee (Pitkin County), Dr. Leland Luchsinger (Colorado Department of Education), first governing committee President Pat Harvey (Lake County), Bill Stevens (Colorado Commission on Higher Education), Josephine "Jody" Busby (superintendent of Garfield County Schools) and Harold Koonce (Eagle County).



Harold Koonce of Eagle was an early advocate and came up with the name, "Colorado Mountain College." Photo: Doug Stewart

to 260 in favor, and Leadville, with 902 to 182. Summit County, as expected, voted against the ballot question. The little town of Slate Creek voted 100 percent against, zero in favor and nine against. (In order to fund the district, voters also had to approve a three mill property tax, a vote that was held in December.)

"We're elated with the margin by which the proposal passed," Delaplaine told a *Glenwood Springs Sage* newspaper reporter. "We expected strong support in Glenwood Springs and Leadville, but it was a rewarding surprise to find the proposal passing with strong margins even in some towns which we feared might be in opposition."

After a successful petition to the state board signed by the voters in the five counties of the prospective district, the election was set for November 2, 1965. The committee members were divided about the outcome. Some felt that given the strong opposition in Summit County, especially Breckenridge, a favorable vote might not be assured. In the final tally, the district won, 2,652 votes to 1,142. The strongest leads were in Glenwood Springs, which voted 766

Delaplaine recalled that right after the November election, he asked the Garfield County clerk what they were supposed to do next. The clerk said they needed to form a governing committee made up of people from each of the counties in the district. Eight weeks later, on December 28, 1965, voters again went to the polls to elect representatives from the five counties to serve on what was then called the governing committee. Members included Pat Harvey of Leadville, representing Lake County; David Delaplaine, representing Garfield County; Harold Koonce of Eagle County; Harold Clark of Summit County; and David Barbee, representing Pitkin County. The committee held their first meeting on January 7, 1966, and elected officers. Pat Harvey was named president; Harold Koonce, treasurer; and David Delaplaine, secretary. The first decision was actually a realization. Although the original plan was to open in the fall of 1966, the committee



Front page story, Glenwood Sage Reminder



## CAMPUS LAND WAS A WAGER

According to some neighbors, Sam Campbell and Georges Dapples lost some land at Spring Valley to Bill Foster and Bruce Dixon in a poker game. The bill of sale was written on a matchbook cover. Later, Foster and Dixon donated their winnings to the fledgling college for a new campus.

members acknowledged that it was unreasonable to expect the land, buildings and faculty to materialize over the next nine months. The state department of education had monitored the progress of the college district. They urged the committee to put off the opening until fall of 1967. In their opinion, the college needed the leadership of a president, and several months for him to direct the formation of the college, before opening the school. And they agreed the college would open with two campuses, one in Leadville and one in Glenwood Springs.

## A NEW NAME, FINDING A HOME

Also at that inaugural meeting, the group considered several names for the college, according to Delaplaine. All agreed that the name must express a sense of place of a college amid the central Rocky Mountains. It was truly a mountain college, with 150 peaks over 11,000 feet and 12 over 14,000 feet and several major ski areas. The district, spanning the Continental Divide, was rich in natural resources such as oil shale, gold, silver, and a sprawling national forest. It needed a name to match that grandeur. Suggestions were thrown on the table.

- Roaring Fork or White River College were fine for a district within the boundaries of those rivers, but would not do for the counties farther afield.
- Western Colorado College was too broad a name.
- Summit County College might appease voters there but not voters in the rest of the district.

Then Harold Koonce spoke up. "How about Colorado Mountain College?" he asked. "It covers the waterfront." It was accepted immediately and unanimously.

With a very tight timeframe until opening in fall 1967, the governing committee also looked for temporary housing for its operations in Glenwood Springs. The committee met with the owner of the Hotel Colorado. Discussions to lease a portion of the building broke down over cost. They also looked at the old post office, hoping it would be declared surplus and available for



Spring Valley landowners who donated property for West Campus included (left to right, top to bottom): Jim Quigley, Dan and Jim Quigley, Dan and Ellen Quigley, Jim and Sharon Nieslanik, Esther Hopkins, Raymond Hopkins, Kathleen Hopkins, Jackie Cabrinha, Peter Cabrinha, Bob Peckham, Sam Campbell, William E. Foster, Bruce Dixon, Luke Anthony. Not pictured: Georges H. Dapples.



## GIL CISNEROS

*From Miner to Executive*

In 1967, Gil Cisneros was newly married, living in Leadville, and working in the Climax Molybdenum mine. He enrolled at East Campus of Colorado Mountain College where he could take classes between shifts at the mine.

“I didn’t know what I wanted to do, but I couldn’t see myself working underground for the rest of my life,” he later recalled. After taking a number of core classes he transferred to Adams State College and completed his bachelor’s degree.

CMC was the launching pad for an illustrious career, which culminated in the founding of the Chamber of Commerce of the Americas in Denver in 2001, where he served as chairman and CEO. With offices throughout North, Central and South America, the chamber fosters relationships between United States businesses and Latin American countries. Cisneros was also president of Grupo Cisneros Internacional, an international consulting firm that helped U.S. companies develop Latin American markets.

In 2002 Hispanic magazine recognized Cisneros with its annual US-Latin American Friendship Award.

“I’ve been very, very lucky. I was in the right place at the right time, several times in my life, and it started with CMC,” he said. “CMC was a wonderful, wonderful experience for me.”

lease, but were told another federal agency would likely take over the building. It later housed the White River National Forest headquarters.

The committee also scouted possible locations in and around Leadville. They considered a defunct condominium project, the Pan-Ark, but decided it was too far from town. The old post office in Leadville was considered, but had not been declared surplus and was not available for lease.

Even before the election, the governing committee had considered a site in Glenwood Springs for the western campus. Located on the west side of the Roaring Fork River, and a stone’s throw from downtown, was a parcel below Red Mountain owned by Union Oil Company of California. The company had purchased the land—not with the intention of keeping it as a ranch, but for its water rights.

Although Union Oil had offered a portion of their land to the college at no cost, a consulting geologist warned the committee that the land sat atop unstable soils. So the committee passed on that generous offer. Other options for land in and around Glenwood Springs were considered. Of considerable interest was a parcel of land on Four Mile Creek south of downtown. William F. Stevens offered for sale 160 acres he had purchased from local rancher Primo Martino. Included in the deal were 50 acres adjoining Stevens’ land, owned by the Holy Ghost Fathers. The asking price was \$165,000: \$125,000 for the Stevens-Martino property and \$40,000 for the Holy Ghost Fathers’ land.

Another property that received some consideration was the VIX Ranch in New Castle. Pete Mattivi, New Castle mayor and Garfield County commissioner, informed the governing committee the ranch was for sale. Mattivi said Henry Dietz, a land developer from Lead Hill, Arkansas was interested in purchasing the 900-acre ranch and would give the college 300 acres. He also offered 120 adjacent acres for \$1,750 an acre. Mattivi said the town would supply sewer service at no cost and Rippy Construction would build a road connecting the ranch with Interstate 70, also at no cost.

Then came an offer the college could not refuse, despite the concerted efforts of some Glenwood Springs businessmen. On September 29, 1966, the *Glenwood Springs Sage Reminder* reported that seven landowners who lived on a plateau south of town called Spring Valley offered to donate 383 acres of land



## THE GRAY HORSE

Spring Valley rancher Jim Nieslanik was in the milk barn one evening when his neighbor, Jim Quigley, rode up on his gray horse and asked if Nieslanik wanted to donate some land for a campus for the new college. Despite some initial hesitation, Jim and his wife Sharon donated 75 acres to the eventual total of 815 acres given to the college for Spring Valley Campus. It has subsequently been ranked among the most beautiful college campuses in the United States.

*Photo courtesy of Marianne Quigley Ackerman*

carved from their respective ranches, at no cost to the college, and with no strings attached. The offer to the governing committee came from rancher Jim Quigley, who promised the land before even talking to his neighbors. The neighbors—Jim’s brother Dan and wife Ellen, Jim and Sharon Nieslanik, Ray and Esther Hopkins, Peter and Jackie Hopkins Cabrinha, Kathleen Hopkins, Bob Peckham, Sam Campbell, Georges Dapples, Bill Foster, Bruce Dixon and Luke Anthony—later agreed. Jim Nieslanik tells a story about seeing Jim Quigley ride up to his barn one day on his gray horse. Jim Quigley said, “What do you think if we give some land and we’ll have a college up here?” Nieslanik recalled in a 2016 interview. “And I’m thinking, you know, maybe Jim’s got a loose screw,” Nieslanik chuckled. But he and the other neighbors agreed to give their land.

“Our gift was pastureland, but more than that it was our emotional life, our economic life and our legacy to our children,” said Peter Cabrinha.

Once the public got wind of the offer, the protests started flying. In October, a group of Glenwood businessmen calling themselves the Citizens League, spoke out at a governing committee meeting. The Spring Valley site was too far away

from town, there was no road into the place, water was unreliable, and it was too expensive to develop. Joining them were representatives of the Glenwood Springs Chamber of Commerce as well as a group calling itself the Tri-County Taxpayers Association, both of whom vigorously opposed the Spring Valley option. All three groups liked the Stevens-Martino property because it was close to town. That night, after a lengthy executive session, the governing committee voted to rescind their approval of the Spring Valley donation.

Debate raged on until in a November 4 meeting, after due consideration, additional acreage from the ranchers brought the initial total to 588 acres. Following an executive session that went into the wee hours, the committee did an about-face and unanimously approved

**“What do you think if we give some land and we’ll have a college up here?”**  
– Jim Quigley



*Dr. Joe U. Davenport, first president of Colorado Mountain College*

the Spring Valley land offer. The decision was a simple one, in fact. The college did not have the money to buy a piece of land outright, nor was it able to incur a big debt. For good or ill, the new West Campus would be located atop a beautiful plateau south of town, with a panoramic view of the mountains and iconic Mount Sopris.

Land matters in Leadville were much more clear-cut. In March of 1966, the governing committee had met to consider a permanent site for East Campus. The Lake County commissioners and the Lake County Sanitation District

had offered 133 acres south of the city, in a winter recreation area called Dutch Henry Hill. One stipulation of the offer was that the existing city dump be covered over or moved at the expense of the college. Three additional parcels were also offered to round up the size of the offer to 300 acres. As with Spring Valley, the land had spectacular views—overlooking the Mosquito and Sawatch mountain ranges, including Colorado’s two highest peaks, Mounts Elbert and Massive. At 10,152 feet in elevation, Leadville was the highest incorporated city in the United States, and now had the highest-elevated college campus.

## A VISIONARY PRESIDENT

In their second meeting, on January 13, 1966, the governing committee launched a search for the new college president. After sifting through a score of applications, the governing committee members narrowed the field down to five. At that point they decided, instead of inviting the applicants to

a central place for a round of interviews, governing committee members would pay surprise visits to their home colleges. Delaplane recalled his visit to Oakland Community College in a town outside Detroit, Michigan. He and David Barbee asked to see Joe Davenport. Apparently not put off by the unannounced visit, Davenport asked for an hour to make arrangements. In the meantime he called his wife and asked if he could bring the two men home for dinner. Delaplane recalled, “What we saw [that night at dinner] was graciousness ... [he was] just a real down to earth sort of person. Very upfront, [he] wasn’t trying to impress us, not highfalutin, but just a gracious person. [Those were] the kind of skills that we felt we wanted for this little mountain town college. He flew his own airplane. That helped, because you needed an airplane to get around the district bisected by the Continental Divide.”

Davenport also had a key philosophy that the committee believed was fundamental. The college, he felt, should serve the needs of the entire college district, whether that be basic academic courses, continuing

## CATHY ABEGG JENSEN

*First Graduate*

Because her last name began with an “A”, and because West Campus commencement was scheduled before East Campus, Cathy Abegg (now Jensen) was the first person to receive a diploma from Colorado Mountain College, in 1969. She’d vacationed in Glenwood Springs with her family, which was from Denver. Jensen attended the University of Denver for a year but found it too expensive, so she went to work for a couple of years until she had a better idea of what she wanted to do. She’d heard from a friend about the newly opened school in Glenwood Springs. Jensen had worked with her father in his printing business, and so enrolled in the commercial art program.

Education at CMC was not the traditional classroom experience, but followed an independent study model. “It was very different from anything that I had ever been involved in before,” she said in a 2015 interview. Self-paced learning was not for everyone, especially for students just out of high school. “It was such a beautiful place and there was so much going on around that it was very easy to put the school projects and academics aside and just live life because it was wonderful,” she said.

But she “kept her ducks in a row” and did the work. “It turned out very well for me and I think probably for a lot of people.”

During her second year, Jensen met her future husband John, who was also in the commercial art program. He’d come to CMC intending to transfer to a four-year college. After Jensen finished her two-year associate degree, the couple transferred to Colorado State University, then built a design business in Los Angeles with clients such as Disney and Universal Studios.

Jensen made lifelong friendships during her CMC years, among them Marianne Quigley Ackerman. Ackerman’s family donated part of their ranch for the CMC campus, and Marianne was also a student in that first class.

“We’ve been back many times over the years to visit,” said Cathy Jensen, who retired in Glenwood Springs with John, “and it just feels like coming home.”





Foundation construction at West Campus near Glenwood Springs prepared the site for prefabricated modular buildings, transported from Denver, and identical to those installed at East Campus in Leadville.



Construction on both campuses began in April 1967, and quickly hit a snag in Leadville where concrete could not be poured until June.



Neighbors, local residents, and college officials gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony at West Campus. Photo courtesy of Marianne Quigley Ackerman

education for adults, workforce training for area businesses or vocational training for those who wanted something other than a four-year college degree. The programs would focus on a student-centered approach that adjusted teaching to individual learning styles. It was education for the entire community.

David Barbee called it a systems approach. “The idea was that everyone can learn but they need the right environment. You can’t teach everyone the same way. So training programs had to be developed that were outcome-based. Sometimes the teaching matter had to be adjusted,” he said. In order to serve the student best, the college needed to be flexible in the way it delivered its programs, and needed to measure the outcome of those programs. For example, if a student took a welding course, he had to demonstrate that he could solder a joint, Barbee said, not just that he had read about soldering.

Oakland Community College, Joe Davenport’s college, followed that principle. For the governing committee, Joe Davenport was their man. He was hired on April 15, 1966, and moved to Glenwood with his family on July 1.

### FINDING THE MONEY

Over the course of that year, as land and temporary housing questions were debated and negotiated, the committee was also working to find its financial footing. Revenue from the 3-mill property tax approved by the voters in November of 1965 would not come in to the college until a year later. And while support based on the student enrollment would come in from the state board of education, funding was not rolling in right away. In addition, though the committee had hoped to secure state and federal funding for construction, they were told that it would not be forthcoming until the college was officially accredited, a multiyear process.

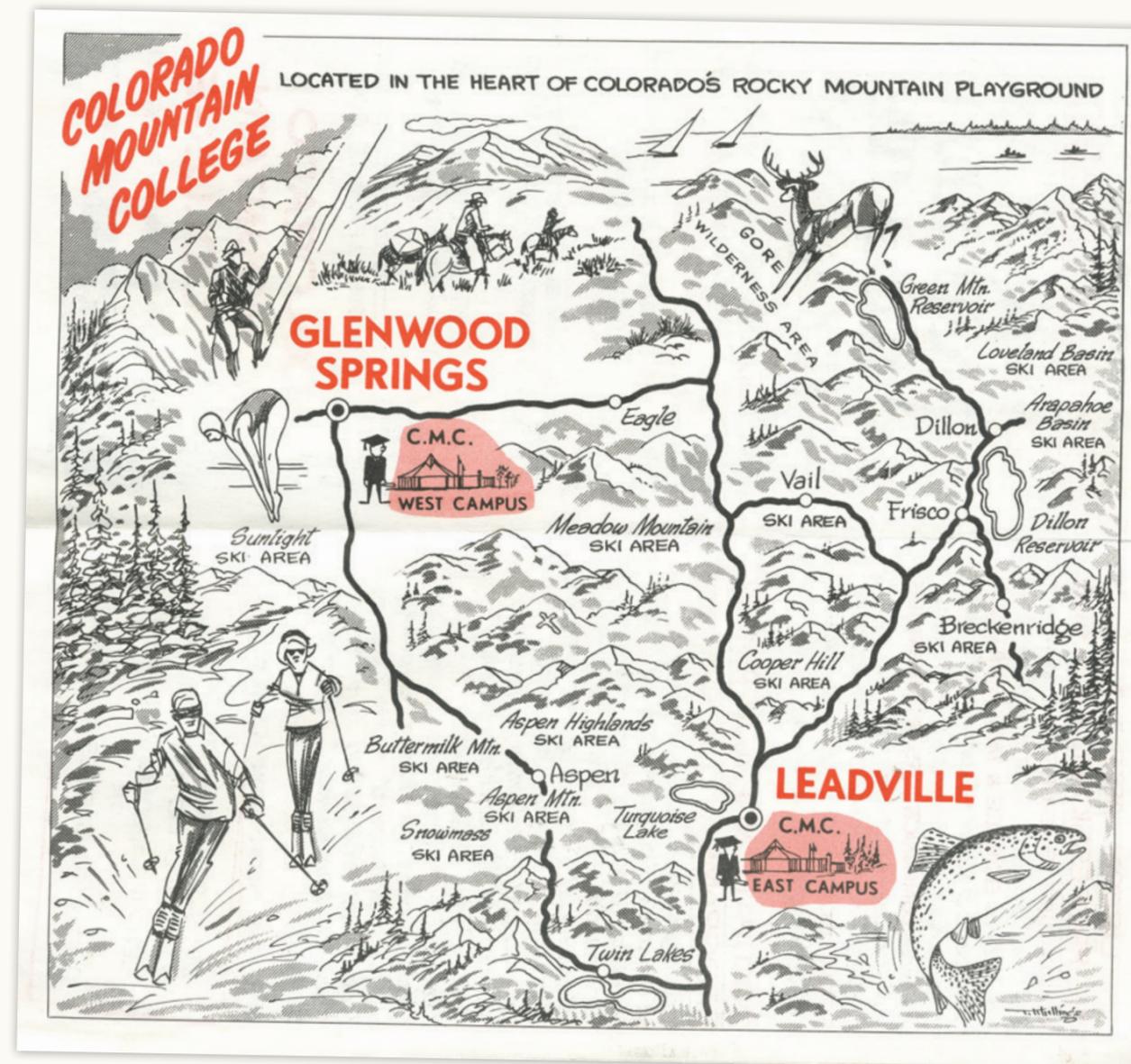
However, a big boost came in January when the college was named the Area Technical-Vocational School by the Colorado Department of Vocational Education. As such, CMC would offer vocational training to college students, high school students, and others. The school was also entitled to federal and state funding for those programs, which would cover instructors, materials, and construction of facilities. The governing committee considered a variety of programs, including aviation technology, astrophysical technology, auto mechanics, building trades, civil technology, commercial

art, data processing, drafting, electronics, farm and ranch management, food service technology, home economics, industrial management, landscape technology, metals and mining technology, office management, commercial photography, recreation supervision, resort management, and secretarial science.

In February 1967, a financial adviser appeared on the scene who would help the college secure additional funding. Mike Strang, Carbondale rancher, and later a state legislator and US congressman, was a financial adviser with Bosworth Sullivan, a brokerage and investment banking firm with an office in Glenwood Springs. Knowing the college was in a financial crunch, he suggested that revenue bonds could cover the cost of construction until tax revenues came in. These were short-term bonds, amounting to \$2.2 million, with a 4.75 percent interest rate. They would be repaid by revenues from tuition and other fees once the college opened. The governing committee accepted his suggestion, and by mid-March the bond sale was completely subscribed, primarily by local and Denver banks as well as AMAX, Climax Molybdenum’s parent company. On April 23, at the ceremonial groundbreaking for East Campus in Leadville, Mike Strang presented governing committee treasurer Harold Koonce with a check for \$2.2 million from revenue bonds. Colorado Mountain College was on its way.

### THE MODULARS

With seed money in place, the governing committee hired Sayer and Andresen Architects, and approved a design of prefabricated modular buildings which would be manufactured in Denver by Uniport Corporation. Three hexagonal “clusters” were planned: learning labs, vocational-technical shops, and student unions. Buildings would be identical on both campuses. The residence halls were three, two-story, hexagonal buildings grouped around



Early on, college staff realized that they would have to recruit beyond the local district to meet enrollment goals. Marketing materials promoted the benefits of living and learning in the heart of the Colorado Rocky Mountains.



## THE COST OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION

In 1967, 271 students were enrolled at East Campus. In-district tuition was \$6.75 per credit. With fees, the total cost for the year was \$262 for a full-time student. A bottle of Coke cost a dime.

flatbed trucks, hauling over Vail Pass, through Glenwood Canyon, across the Grand Avenue Bridge, and the very narrow, windy road up to Spring Valley. East Campus buildings traveled over Loveland Pass, negotiating the two-lane highway. Genny Michael, one of the first employees at East Campus, pitched in with everyone else to prepare the new campus. She recalled that there were no lights as the buildings were being finished, so employees brought lamps from home. The Climax Mine, she said, “was just an incredible partner in every way to make sure the college was successful... offering staff, bulldozers, you name it.” While these first campus buildings were considered an interim solution until they could be replaced by permanent structures, some were still in use 40 years later.

Although Joe Davenport was not due to begin work at CMC until July, he had already started the work of his new position. He had told the governing committee that he would start hiring a staff. One day in the spring, Davenport called his colleague, Ted Pohrte, into his office at Oakland Community College, and told Pohrte that he’d been appointed the president of a new college in “the heart of the Rockies.” Davenport asked if Pohrte would serve as the dean of instruction at the new college. Pohrte, who was the chair of mathematics, science and engineering technology at Oakland, accepted the new position.

Over the next few months, Joe Davenport filled his President’s Council: in addition to Pohrte, Jim Stoner became dean of technical and vocational education; Rodney Anderson, dean of personnel services; Gordon W. Cook, business manager; and Arthur Schmidt, dean of East Campus. The group was busy that summer of 1966, hiring faculty and setting the curriculum.

a central atrium. The modulares would be transported by truck to Glenwood Springs and Leadville.

The committee also contracted with Hyder Construction to begin setting the foundations and to bring utilities to both East and West Campuses. Work began in April and quickly hit a snag in Leadville. According to Bill Bowden, who oversaw campus construction for the college, concrete was usually not poured until the warm weather set in, in June.

“It took some convincing to get the one and only concrete plant to open up on May 15,” Bowden said. By summer, the modulares began to arrive. It was slow going for the big

## PURPOSE AND MISSION

Besides building and hiring, Davenport and his staff put much thought into the “why” of Colorado Mountain College. The result was a written statement of the purpose and mission of the college. Given the broad geographic area of the district encompassing small rural mountain towns and spanning the Continental Divide, the early visionaries considered CMC as one college. It was in essence a fundamental concept, founded on local control and direction, with multiple locations.

In the document, the new administration stated a simple purpose: “to serve the educational needs of youths and adults both in the college district and in the state of Colorado.” Out-of-state students would also be enrolled in small numbers, “to provide enrichment of thought and experience on the college campuses.” High school students were considered part of the original mix, as they would be enrolled in classes through the area vocational School on each of the two college campuses. And further, the college would serve the residents of the district “by a variety of community service programs through its continuing education division.”



Construction crews continued to build the first two campuses even after classes began on October 2, 1967, with the sounds of power tools accompanying classroom instruction.

From its inception, CMC was an open-enrollment college, with no academic or other requirements. The students had only “to demonstrate a desire to learn and have an ability to profit from its educational programs.”

The method of instruction was new and innovative, and highly individualized according to the needs and desires of the student.

The statement of mission was broad-ranging:

1. To prepare students for responsible citizenship through liberal education.
2. To give students an opportunity to prepare for a four-year college by completing the first two years of academic, business or professional courses.
3. To give high school students and non-high school students a chance to take vocational and technical courses.
4. To give adults a chance to continue their education in vocational, avocational and cultural areas.

The method of delivery was an experiment acknowledged by the president and his staff. Instruction took place without traditional classrooms. Students met one-on-one with instructors and in small or large discussion groups and assemblies. Course material was offered through what was described as a “multi-sensory presentation of materials:” video and audio tapes and film. It was an experiment that had met success at Oakland Community College. Later, in a review of the 1967-68 academic year, the administration acknowledged that this first year of Colorado Mountain College was also an experiment that had its successes and failures. Success depended on student motivation. Students who lacked motivation to direct their own learning, failed.

## TWO STAGGERING BLOWS

In 1967, as the college was opening, two staggering blows hit at about the same time. Underestimated construction costs caused a large budget deficit, and led to the replacement of the business manager, Gordon Cook.

The second occurred shortly after the academic year began. Colorado Mountain College opened to students on October 2, although both campuses were still a construction zone. A month later tragedy struck. On the Saturday after Thanksgiving, November 25, President Davenport was killed while landing his plane at Glenwood Springs airport. Delaplane’s family operated the airport, selling aviation gas and tie-downs for planes. “I was at the airport at the time,” remembered Delaplane, “and we got word that his plane had crashed, and we called his wife and told her. We didn’t know if he was alive or dead. **So, it was a terrible, terrible day.**”

## Young educator killed in plane crash

Dr. Joe U. Davenport, 46, president of Colorado Mountain College and a former resident of the High Point community, was killed in the crash of his private plane at the Glenwood Springs

(Colo.) airport at about 9 a. m. Saturday. He was a brother of Mrs. Glenn Atkinson of Barnett, a teacher at Eldon High School.

Dr. Davenport began his career in education at High Point.

At the time of the crash he was preparing to take a son and two companions to Aspen, Colo., to meet Mrs. Davenport and other members of the family for a skiing outing. He had taken a brief flight to check weather conditions, and was returning to the airport for his passengers when the landing gear on his plane failed, according to word received here.

Surviving are Mrs. Davenport, the former Barbara Shepherd, of Little Rock, Ark.; three sons and two daughters, John and James, 18-year-old twins, Jane, 16, Ruth, 14, and Paul, 11; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Davenport, of Elsinore,

(Continued on Page 2)



**“I was at the airport at the time, and we got word that his plane had crashed, and we called his wife and told her. We didn’t know if he was alive...”**

**– David Delaplane**

On the Saturday after Thanksgiving, November 25, President Davenport was killed while testing the landing gear on his plane at the Glenwood Springs airport. He had been preparing to fly with his son and a friend to meet other members of the Davenport family who were skiing in Aspen.

Davenport had planned to fly with one of his sons and a friend to Aspen, but was told his landing gear was sticking. Before boarding the two boys, he decided to test the landing gear. He got a thumbs up from the ground and was returning for the boys when the plane flipped. “We got the word that Joe had been killed,” recalled Delaplaine, but at first they didn’t know what had happened to his son. “So it was a terrible, terrible time.”

The next day, Ted Pohrte was appointed acting president. “I accepted on the condition we would seek someone else to be the permanent president,” he said.

By other measurements, that first year was a success. Approximately 600 students enrolled between the two campuses, taking classes in two-year liberal arts programs with the intent to transfer to a four-year college. Others signed up for over a dozen occupational as well as continuing education programs. Students from within the college district paid \$6.75 per credit hour. Students in the liberal arts program had options ranging from agriculture to art to English. The occupational courses ranged from astrogeophysical technology to secretarial science.

### GROWING CHALLENGES

CMC began to experience growing pains in year two of the community college experiment. In early June of 1968, the governing committee gathered to approve a \$1.2 million budget for the coming fiscal year that included raising the mill levy from 3 to 3.95 mills. The new business manager, Charles Peterson, explained that enrollments for the first year had been overestimated and debt service had grown beyond expectation. Salaries for the burgeoning faculty added to the 1967-68 budget shortfall, which he estimated at \$350,000. Peterson also pointed out that the budget for 1968-69 was a bare bones budget, and anything less would certainly mean staff and faculty layoffs and program cuts.

The public had already gotten wind of the new budget and proposed mill levy, and was not happy. Glenwood Springs Chamber Manager Roger Henderson presented a resolution questioning the need to raise property taxes. Representatives of the Leadville Chamber, on the other hand, supported it wholeheartedly.

To add to the college’s financial woes, it received a bill from the Lake County Board of County Commissioners for \$10,000, the cost of moving the city dump from land the county had donated for East Campus.

After almost a year on the job, Pohrte stepped down and Elbie Gann took over as CMC’s second president. Gann, a former superintendent of Aspen public schools, had been among the original applicants for the job Joe Davenport landed. In fact, he’d been given to believe from a number of governing committee members that he was the top contender. As the second president, Gann proved to be a strong administrator.



The first students at Colorado Mountain College learned through a self-directed, “audio tutorial” method implemented by President Davenport.



Elbie Gann, CMC’s second president, awards a diploma at East Campus commencement ceremony in Leadville.

The new president inherited challenges not only in finances but also in infrastructure. The new road into West Campus, constructed by Garfield County at no cost to the college, was so washboarded, Gann told the governing committee, that the engine had jolted out of a student’s car.

After assessing the college’s financial situation, Gann asked the governing committee to give him authority to borrow \$70,000 from the First National Bank

### Gann believed in the traditional approach: structured classes, tests, term papers.

of Glenwood Springs, to bridge the gap between the date interest was due on the revenue bonds and the date when monies would start coming in from student registration fees. He promised to pay it back in a week. As it turned out, Gann didn’t have to resort to borrowing money, as enrollment on both campuses for the 1968-69 school year was up significantly from the previous year.

### A VIEW OF THE FUTURE

With a few semesters under their belts, the administration and governing committee were taking a brighter view of the future. Gann and his team put together an ambitious budget and plan for the third academic year of the college. In a report

to the governing committee, Gann projected no tax increase for the next year. He predicted an 18 percent increase in enrollment. He decided to restructure his administrative staff. He also decided to move his office from downtown Glenwood Springs to West Campus at Spring Valley, where he would act as both the chief administrator of the college district as well as the campus.

In addition, Gann made a huge shift in the summer of 1969. He believed the independent learning model that Davenport had brought from Oakland Community College had not been an overall success. Instead of the self-directed “audio tutorial” method, students

needed “structure and direction,” he later explained in a *Denver Post* feature in April 1972. Gann believed in the traditional approach: structured classes, tests, term papers.

New programs, classes, and locations were planned for the next year, responding to the needs and desires of both the communities and the students. The Colorado Mountain College idea was growing beyond the two original campuses. Continuing education was expanding, offering a variety of classes in almost all of the towns within the district.



Located within an hour of several major ski resorts, East Campus in Leadville was the obvious choice for locating a ski area management program to train a new generation of skilled operators for the burgeoning ski industry.

### SKI INDUSTRY PARTNERS



One of CMC’s strengths has been identifying, and then meeting, the needs of its communities. In Leadville, in 1970, administrators saw an opportunity to serve the burgeoning ski industry with well-trained workers. The town had a ski area just minutes away—Cooper Hill (later renamed Ski Cooper). New, larger ski resorts were sprouting all over the central Colorado mountains. Two CMC instructors, Jim Stoner and George Schreiber, met with local ski area operators to see if they would provide on-slope training for students. Indeed they would. Stoner and Schreiber set to work and developed a curriculum for the one-year certificate program.

The program launched in fall 1971. Instructor Alf Tieze ran the students through classes in ski area management, lifts and tows, machine shop theory and practice, electronics, and slope and run maintenance, among others. At the time, it was the only program of its kind in the country.

CMC invested in snowcats and snow-making machines, making snow and grooming it on Dutch Henry Hill next to campus. Nearby Cooper Hill served as a learning lab for countless ski area operations students to hone their grooming and patrolling skills. Second-year students attended classes in fall semester. But when the ski areas opened, internships kept them busy at world-class resorts until April.

Curt Bender directed the program from 1981 until 2009, and helped to grow its international reputation for ski industry training. He not only placed graduates around the world, but was asked to help develop ski areas in Russia and China.

Graduates quickly found work in the industry where word of mouth traveled ahead of their résumés. Students came from all over the world to take the courses. They came out of the program ready to do almost any job at a ski area, many of them working at high levels including preparing courses for the Olympics and world championships.

# Education for All

**“Learning never ceases. The college encourages men and women, young and old, wage earners and housewives, to enroll in courses that will broaden their outlook...”**

– CMC 1966-67 Annual Report



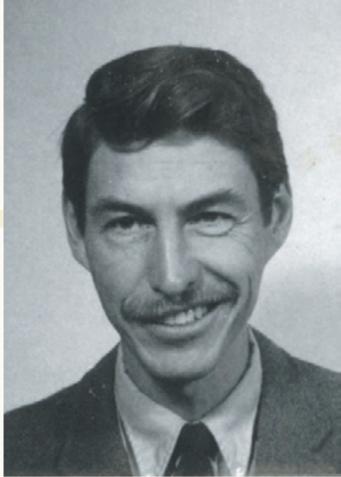
From its inception, CMC was intended to serve the communities within its district. In an assessment of its first year of operation, the administration of the college laid out its vision for continuing education. According to the 1966-67 Annual Report: “Learning never ceases. The college encourages men and women, young and old, wage earners and housewives, to enroll in courses that will broaden their outlook, advance their careers, stimulate their avocations, introduce new ideas, or provide constructive outlets for their leisure time.”

Also at this time CMC thoughtfully changed its self-description from “junior” to “community” college, because it saw itself as a focal point of community life.

The seeds for this had been planted before

the college opened its first two campuses. At a staff meeting in 1967, President Davenport had paused to look around the room. George Stricker happened to look up. Stricker recalled, “Everyone was looking down and I happened to be looking up, and [Joe Davenport] pointed to me and said, ‘George, you’re the director of continuing education.’” Stricker leaned over to someone and said, “Continuing education? What’s that?” He would soon not only learn, but become the champion of what would grow into a vibrant enterprise as the college extended its services into local communities.

The college administration didn’t have a clear focus or plan for what the off-campus program should be. Since continuing education was oriented to residents of the communities,



**“Continuing education?  
What’s that?”**  
– George Stricker

*George Stricker led the dynamic, entrepreneurial continuing education effort at Colorado Mountain College.*

*Shirley Bowen’s self-described slow typing didn’t keep her from a career that began in Leadville, continued as director of CMC Carbondale, and finally as college-wide director of developmental education.*



Stricker soon moved from West Campus to an office in the basement of the east wing of the Hotel Colorado in Glenwood Springs. One of the first instructors he hired was Emmy Neil, who taught classes in sewing and knitting up and down the Roaring Fork Valley. Neil was to become one of the iconic teachers for the college.

Bob Becker organized classes on East Campus and in Leadville and Minturn, and Stricker programmed virtually everywhere else. Stricker gave a glowing report to the college governing committee in January 1969. With the program just in its infancy, Colorado Mountain College had 80 courses offered by 60 instructors in 12 towns with a total of 600 students enrolled. There were requests for 200 more courses.

With the early success in 1969, Colorado Mountain College launched what was to become a key element to the survival and long-term growth of the institution: education for all of its communities.

**LEADVILLE**

Continuing education classes began in Leadville in 1967, when CMC opened its doors to students. Part-time director Bob Becker was in charge. The first classes included ceramics, sewing, retail sales, bowling, gourmet cooking, and political science. The new field of data processing was offered as a credit class. That first year, 135 people enrolled in 13 courses which were taught on East Campus and in town at various locations. The program grew quickly.

One early bulletin sought to recruit teachers to increase the burgeoning list of continuing education courses: “Wanted: People with Skills and Knowledge to Share. It is possible to offer just about anything in continuing education and classes can be started whenever we have a group of students and a teacher who are ready to begin.”

In 1969, Becker went from part-time to assistant director under



*Responding to the needs of the time, Colorado Mountain College provided training to miners from the nearby Climax Molybdenum Mine, which was Leadville’s major employer. Photo: courtesy of Lake County Public Library, Colorado Mountain History Collection*

Stricker because of increased demand for classes and revenues from tuition. That year, 55 courses were offered and enrollment topped 526.

Shirley Bowen came to work for Becker in 1970. In a 2016 interview she recalled the day she was hired. Before going to the job interview, she said to her husband, “Just pray he doesn’t ask me if I type.” Her background was in accounting, not secretarial work.

**“Wanted: People with Skills  
and Knowledge to Share.”**  
– CMC bulletin

Becker did not ask the question during the interview. However, when she got home and walked in the door, the phone was ringing. “You can type, can’t you?” Becker asked. Yes, Bowen answered, “just not very fast.” Undeterred, Becker offered her the job. Bowen went on to a long career with the college, including a promotion to director of the Carbondale Center in 1976.



*Continuing education at East Campus in Leadville focused on vocational training, with classes in auto mechanics, metal work, mining, nursing, and typing.*



Along with classes, the Leadville continuing education office launched a new program in 1972 at Lake County High School. Adult High School gave adults the opportunity to complete their secondary education. Thirty-three adults graduated from the program with their high school diplomas in the spring of 1973.

From its earliest days, Leadville had been a blue-collar town. Hard rock mining was its economic driver, and in the 1970s the Climax Molybdenum Mine was the primary employer. The company was interested in training and attracting workers. With a stated goal to respond to local workforce needs with training classes, CMC established the mining technology certificate program. More general vocational classes were offered through continuing education, including welding, aviation ground school, and auto mechanics.

The avalanche studies program attracted students from the ski industry, Climax, the US Forest Service, and the state highway department. The six-week course taught the physics of snow, hazard forecasting, and avalanche blasting.

Outside the college district, early courses were also taught at Salida and Buena Vista in Chaffee County, in the college’s state-designated service area south of Leadville.

**GLENWOOD SPRINGS**

George Stricker was still operating out of a basement wing of the Hotel Colorado in the early 1970s, but Glenwood Springs, the largest town in the college district, was demanding more than he could handle. Barbara Olsen was hired as the first Glenwood Springs director and oversaw course offerings there and in Carbondale.

Olsen quickly embraced the entrepreneurial environment of continuing education and expanded course offerings to serve the business community, the growing recreation industry, and the evolving women’s movement that saw many women entering the workforce or expanding their role in the political world. She hired teachers like Mary Williams and Nancy Flood, who taught credit courses in psychology, health, and early childhood education to a growing female student body.



## EMMY NEIL

*Pioneer Student, Associate Professor*

As she remembered 25 years later, “It was a beautiful, peaceful September day the first time I drove up the old, narrow, twisty, and dusty Cattle Creek Road, going to the new college.” Neil was on her way up to West Campus to her Spanish class. She wondered if the college-age students in her class would accept an older person in their midst. Two years later she earned her Associate of Arts degree and received her diploma with CMC’s first graduating class.

The student became the teacher in 1968, when she was hired to teach clothing construction and tailoring classes from Aspen to Riffe. “I have hauled my sewing machines and equipment in and out of schools, churches, empty buildings, and storerooms,” she later recalled.

One class was held in the basement of the Hotel Colorado in a former World War II brig, a holdover from the wartime conversion of the hotel to a US Navy hospital. “Many students learned their skills in the brig, complete with barred windows and door,” she said.

Neil was a well-known face up and down the valley, and a great recruiter for CMC and the continuing education program. Her decades-long legacy is preserved at the Glenwood Springs Center with the “Emmy Neil Room.”



*Henry Mead and others taught continuing education classes in the basement of the Hotel Colorado in Glenwood Springs.*



*Martha Cochran became director of the CMC Glenwood Springs Center when she was 24. She later directed the development of a permanent facility. Photo: Walter Gallacher*

## Over 40 percent of Glenwood Springs residents would be enrolled in a continuing education class or activity each semester.

Olsen left in 1976 and Martha Cochran was named director of the Glenwood Springs Center. She was 24 years old and had worked with Olsen for two years. Cochran brought a different kind of energy and perspective that led to rapid growth and expanding areas of community involvement.

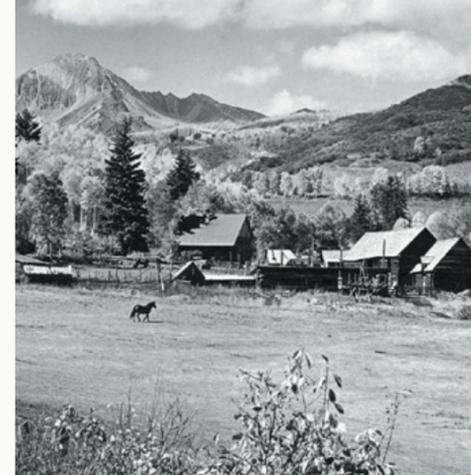
At times during the next few years, over 40 percent of the town’s residents would be enrolled in a continuing education class or activity each semester. The center became the training center for emergency services,

the rafting industry, the Glenwood Springs Police Department, local fire departments, Valley View Hospital nurses’ aides, early childhood education certification programs, and many small businesses seeking workers with entry-level skills. It was also a creative and intellectual outlet for less traditional types of education.

Because the Glenwood Springs Center had classrooms, it was busy day and night. The classrooms were unusual, including a room that was the former brig used by the Navy which had occupied the Hotel Colorado during World War II. Emmy Neil taught sewing and knitting courses, which were always full. Some people took every “Emmy class” every semester for years.

“I didn’t understand that,” Cochran said, “until I realized that it had nothing to do with sewing and knitting and everything to do with socialization and independence at a time when many women didn’t work outside the home.”

Frank Olson, a classically trained sculptor and former member of the Austrian Olympic fencing team, taught marble sculpture and fencing classes. His classes often startled visitors who encountered waving swords in the hallway. Friday evenings were free movies for the community. Various lecture series explored new topics such as environmental issues and women’s studies. Richard Luetke, a Vietnam veteran, became the first student to graduate with an associate degree by taking all of his classes through continuing education. Walter Gallacher, recently returned from a stint as a VISTA worker on the Oglala Sioux reservation, taught sociology and began a long career at CMC.



## ART AT ANDERSON RANCH

Starting in 1968, summer art classes were offered by CMC at the old Anderson Ranch in Snowmass Village. The college invested in upgrades to the facility which later became the nonprofit Anderson Ranch Art Center. Photo: Anderson Ranch Arts Center



*Steve Mills was the first director for the CMC Aspen Center, forging partnerships with local schools and non-profits to enhance learning despite limited facilities.*

For many years, the center operated with a staff of four—Cochran, Susan Waldo-Harris, Kim Larsen, and Karen Dunbar.

As in other communities, finding classroom space was a constant challenge. Classes were held at the Glenwood Springs High School, city hall, several churches, and the occasional living room.

Adding greatly to the busy atmosphere of the Glenwood Center was the fact that the hotel space was shared with the central office of community education and RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program). Vicky Hunter was instrumental in creating a support system for senior citizens that was just as innovative as what was happening in the adult education arena. The Traveler program, later operated by the county, transported senior citizens to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and other activities.



*Located in the Wheeler Opera House building (at right) between a pub and a thrift shop, CMC was at the center of life in Aspen in the early 1970s. Photo: Aspen Historical Society*

## ASPEN

The Aspen office was to be the image of Colorado Mountain College in the community. Stricker began the process of establishing a presence in Aspen by making a scheduled, weekly visit to town, using the night sergeant’s desk at the Aspen Police Department on Wednesdays to meet with prospective teachers and students. Aspen seemed to be the logical choice to test the viability of the college offering courses aimed at adult students. Aspen was emerging as a year-round resort, and had a mix of highly educated residents, artists, and people interested in recreation and artistic pursuits.

The Aspen one-day-a-week “office” moved to the Aspen Skiing Company’s ticket office in the summer of 1969 and then, at the end of summer, to a long-term office in the Wheeler Opera House. The office was in the old Beck and Bishop grocery next to the Aspen Thrift Shop and above the Jerome B. Wheeler Public House pub. Steve Mills was hired to be the first full-time, community office employee, and “between the thrift shop and the pub you could pretty much learn everything and see everyone without leaving the building,” Mills recalled.

To gain approval from the college administration for the Aspen office, Stricker used his experience and business background. His pitch was simple and convincing—the office would pay for itself, including staff and all operating costs. That became the mantra of continuing education: self-supporting. It would be repeated again and again as Stricker used it to gain approval to add services across the district. It also was ingrained in all the employees in the continuing education division. They became the college’s entrepreneurs, each one running the equivalent of an independent small business. It meant offering a balance of courses, with popular, highly enrolled courses supporting classes that had lower enrollment, but were still important to the community or local business.



## DRAG RACING

In 1974, East Campus in Leadville was home to The Higher Elevation (THE) car club. Composed of auto mechanics students, the group sought sponsors and purchased a classic muscle car—a 1965 Plymouth Barracuda. After 2,000 man-hours of restoration and mechanical work, the car took second place in the Tri-State Auto Exhibition at the Convention Center in Denver. Afterwards, the car was raced in various drag race events, reaching 98 mph in 15.30 seconds.

The college staff did not just organize classes, but also a variety of community activities, events, nonprofit organizations, and groups. They held community meetings at the local CMC center. Endeavors ranged from early childhood education to daycare to senior programs. In many centers the focus was on the arts and developing summer programs in music, dance, and the visual arts.

In Aspen, the CMC center soon became a clearinghouse for a huge variety of programs. Finding space to hold classes was always a challenge, as it was in all communities. Mills found an immediate ally in Richard Lee, the

superintendent of the Aspen School District. Lee was an outspoken advocate for the community use of public schools.

At Aspen High School, CMC had access not only to classrooms, but also to shops and the gymnasium. The college and the school district established a long-term agreement identifying the use requirements, janitorial services, costs, etc.

Aspen High School became the location of the majority of CMC classes, but the high school was also under pressure to serve as the prime location for activities offered by the variety of organizations coming to Aspen in the summer. To relieve the school district of the burden of scheduling and managing the high school in the summer, CMC and the school district secured a grant from the Community Schools program of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to hire a summer coordinator. Janet Landry was hired to coordinate all the summer activities for the school district. As a result, the Aspen Center became the source of information, as well as administrative support in some cases, for a variety of organizations ranging from Ballet West and Aspen Theatre Institute to the Center of the Eye, and others.

Another local organization that got critical support from CMC was Anderson Ranch. It was in its formative stages as an arts center at the newly created Snowmass Ski Area. The ranch was a grouping of log cabins, calving sheds, and other ranch buildings. Brad Reed and Paul Soldner, both local potters, saw the potential for creating a ceramics studio and teaching facility at the ranch. Reed spent many hours in discussions with Bruce Oliphant, an executive of the Janss Corporation, which was the owner of the land and developer of the Snowmass Ski Area. The Janss Corporation finally agreed to let Reed begin renovations at Anderson Ranch and he began pottery classes.

## They became the college's entrepreneurs, each one running the equivalent of an independent small business.

In 1968, Stricker approached Reed about offering the classes through CMC. By 1970, the college was investing a portion of its capital budget into building and renovating the ranch. This was another first for CMC through the Aspen office, with an investment of college resources beyond just staff and operational costs. In 1970, Hank Murrow and his wife Bev moved from the University of Oregon to live and teach at the ranch, and the curriculum expanded to include photo silkscreen, glass blowing, metalworking, welding, plant dyeing, and weaving in addition to ceramics. In 1973, after a change in ownership at Snowmass, the college's lease of the facility was not renewed.

By the early 1970s, continuing education claimed the majority of students at CMC. The Aspen office was growing by leaps and bounds and served as the model for establishing permanent locations and full-time staff in other communities. It was entrepreneurial and creative, had wide-ranging community involvement—and it paid its way.

## VAIL/MINTURN

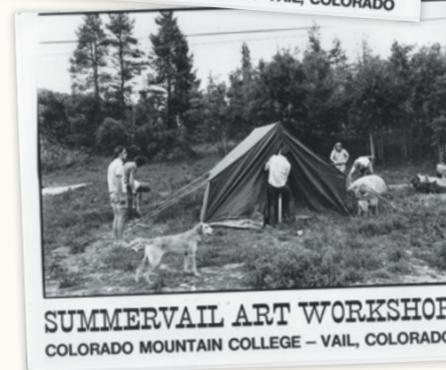
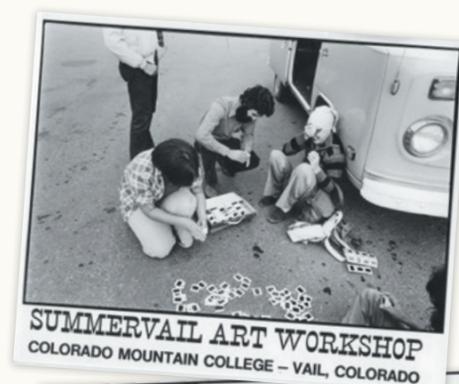
In Eagle County, Bob Becker hired Mike Snyder to organize classes in Vail, Minturn, Redcliff, and Eagle. Artist Randy Milhoan, a Nebraska native, was hired in 1969 to teach art classes in Vail and Minturn, and eventually became director of the Eagle County centers. In an interview in 2016, he explained how he showed up at the CMC office in Minturn to inquire about a job. The office was in a trailer, “in terrible shape.” Inside was Mike Snyder. “He literally had an Army surplus desk and about three folding chairs,” recalled Milhoan. “And some bookcases made of painted concrete blocks.”

## By the early 1970s, continuing education claimed the majority of students at CMC.

“The town of Vail was not very big, nor were any of the towns around here. There was practically nothing here,” Milhoan remembered. He taught out of a space upstairs from the Vail Village Inn and Bar. He also worked at the bar. In 1969, Interstate 70 had not yet bisected the Vail Valley. What he saw looking out his window were cattle on Jack Olson’s ranch, and beyond that the We Ask You Inn Motel.



Summervail drew top artists from around the United States to teach workshops in dance, photography, glassblowing and other disciplines. Tents provided student housing. Photos: Tom Lamb.



Among the first classes taught in Vail were ski area technology, EMT, and man-power training for the Gallegos Construction Company and for Vail Associates, which operated the ski area. Later came a strong dance program, fire science technology, and building trades.

“It was not so hard to get people to take classes. Pretty soon practically everybody you knew in town was either a student, a faculty member, or an advisory board member,” Milhoan said. The people who taught the classes were well educated and experts in their fields or interest areas, he said, “stockbrokers, or doctors, or whatever, they were willing to teach.” The synergy between students and teachers, all living in the same small towns across the district, was a secret to success for the continuing education program.

The programs were relevant to those who lived and worked in the district’s scattered communities. Milhoan recalled teaching for a time in Lesotho, in southern Africa. “I looked at some of the rural schools there that were based on English universities. They were kind of big universities plopped down in the middle of these countries where they just didn’t seem to have any relevance whatsoever.



## SUMMervail

*A Mecca for Artists*

Colorado Mountain College’s Summervail Workshop for art and critical studies had a modest beginning in 1971 at a sheep ranch near Vail. For 14 years the workshops attracted hundreds of famous artists and craftsmen and women from across the country. Some of the famous artists included glassblower Dale Chihuly, painter Ed Ruscha, dancer Cleo Parker Robinson, musician Mason Williams, and jeweler Lynda Watson.

The workshop provided unique opportunities for students to study glass art, ceramics, jewelry, metalsmithing, enameling, blacksmithing, sculpture, woodworking, fiber art, photography, printmaking, welding, papermaking, drawing, painting, and more.

According to Randy Milhoan, who co-founded and oversaw the workshop as CMC’s Eagle County continuing education director, “It was conceived in the winter of 1971, over several beers, by a few local artists who wanted to see the young community become more art aware and wanted to offer their art expertise.” The 1970s saw a revival of arts and crafts in the United States. Techniques borrowed from industry were adapted for artists and taught in college art departments. Those techniques and the artists who were using them converged at Summervail.

It was a full-on summer camp, providing meals and tents for students, faculty, and assistants. After hours there were softball games, rafting, hiking, fishing, and horseback trips in the surrounding Rocky Mountains. There were also “outrageous costumed events, cocktail parties, and dances,” and artistic participation in Vail’s Fourth of July parade, Milhoan said. As the workshop flourished, word got around and it became “a national gathering place. People would come for one class and end up spending the whole summer.”

Summervail made an impact on the area. It was an early provider of summer activities in a mountain resort town, a concept that was embraced by local ski areas as a way to keep visitors coming back in the low season. It brought the first theater, fine art workshop, and art exhibit to Vail, and led to the formation of other workshops and forums.

More importantly, it affected people’s lives. “It was where they made lifelong friends,” Milhoan said. They “established networks of professional contacts, and learned to give and gain the respect of colleagues and fellow artists.”



## SUE DALEY

*Breckenridge Builds a College*

Much of the early success of CMC in Breckenridge was thanks to the dynamic Sue Daley, who served as campus director for nine years. Daley came to town in 1973 and saw an advertisement for a CMC director. Living at the time without a phone, she ran to the nearest one to respond. With a background in education but no direct experience, she took over a small office in Frisco with a secretary. The previous year only 12 people had signed up for classes. So Daley took to the streets, talking to people to find out what they wanted, and selling the idea of CMC.

“I was young and gung-ho and I just sort of jumped in with both feet,” she said later in a story in the *Summit County Journal*. In 1973 enrollment grew to 200. Continuing education had caught on in a big way, and Daley looked to find a permanent home for CMC in Breckenridge. She set her sights on an old brick building built at the turn of the century that had served as the public high school, the fire station, and, most recently, the town hall.

After convincing the CMC administration that the move was the right thing to do, she began a remodeling project. Money was tight, so she called on community members, who volunteered their time to work on the building and who also donated furniture. People would bring things by and “leave them on the doorsteps,” she said. Daley managed the remodeling work with the contractors and even varnished the gym floor herself.

The building was named for then CMC President Elbie Gann. The new CMC center boasted dance, ceramics and photography studios, an art department, classrooms, and the Breckenridge branch of the Summit County Library. It was the first permanent facility besides the main residential campuses for CMC.

Daley left CMC in June 1982, and went on to publish *Summit Magazine* and form the advertising agency Cope, Daley, McCrea, which marketed Breckenridge. She later moved to a ranch near Silt and worked for the CMC Foundation, where she was instrumental in securing multimillion-dollar gifts to support students and a new facility in Rifle.

“Pretty soon practically everybody you knew in town was either a student, a faculty member, or an advisory board member.”

– Randy Milhoan

“Colorado Mountain College operated in an entirely different way,” Milhoan said. “We really never, ever had facilities except on the [residential] campuses.” Classroom space was found wherever an unused room was available. “It was an inexpensive way of having classrooms, and it saved the taxpayers a lot of money. I thought it was a really good way to deliver education.”

## EAGLE

Continuing education began in a similar fashion at the other end of the valley in Eagle: a desk, a file cabinet, a phone, and a mimeograph machine in the town administration building. After a new coat of paint, a large classroom in the old elementary school annex became the office and the lone classroom.

Beth Kubly, who directed the operation from 1974 to 1977, observed that transportation challenges created the need for multiple local CMC centers. “There was only one bore open through the Eisenhower tunnel,” she recalled. I-70 ended at Eagle, and Glenwood Canyon hadn’t been expanded beyond two lanes.

“Another factor,” Kubly said, was “a rather heterogeneous” population in each of the three Eagle County locations. The Vail area had a primarily upscale population. “The courses offered at the center there were mainly art, with others like yoga, Indians of North America, and Lamaze childbirth techniques.” Minturn served a heavily Latino population, drawing students from Red Cliff and Gilman.

“In 1974,” Kubly later recalled, “Eagle was chiefly a ranching community with a population of roughly seven hundred. There were cattle drives

*After the Breckenridge Town Hall was deeded to Colorado Mountain College, the whole community gathered materials and worked to remodel the new home for higher education in Summit County, opened in 1978. Photo: Doug Stewart*

through town twice a year.”

Course offerings there varied from introduction to small engines to range and pasture management; first aid to square dancing; water color painting to GED review. The Eagle Center also offered classes in Gypsum and occasionally in Wolcott.

Coffee Klatsch and Culture was an informal lecture and discussion series over coffee and doughnuts, aimed at the senior population. The first semester or two nobody attended. Kubly speculated that “they didn’t think ‘the college’ was for them due to their age and educational level.” Finally, advisory board member LaJoye Simonds rounded up about 15 older women for a presentation about parapsychological experiences. Kubly thought that “this topic would drive them away for good.” But they were very interested and a few shared their own experiences. After that the program thrived and eventually spun off a Retired Senior Volunteer Program.

In 1976, the college purchased the RE50J school district administration building at 139 Broadway that had also once housed the Koonce Chevrolet dealership. Classes began there for spring



*Beth Kubly scheduled CMC classes in Eagle, providing learning that was relevant for the primarily ranching community.*



*Photographer Joe Deal, a Guggenheim and National Endowment of the Arts fellowship recipient, was among the top creative talent recruited to teach at CMC’s Summit Summer Workshops. The workshops attracted instructors from across the country to teach in the Colorado Rockies for a week. The series filled a niche in Breckenridge’s listless summer season, becoming a precursor to year-round programming there. Photo: Tom Breeden*

quarter 1977 and continued until 2004, when operations moved to a new building in Edwards. During those years, the building in Eagle also served as a central location for collegewide meetings.

## SUMMIT COUNTY

Although Summit County was the only county that had voted against the college district, continuing education took off there as surely as in other counties of the district.

Summit County’s program kicked off with a succession of Susans at the helm. In 1971, Susan Dorris opened the first CMC office in Frisco. The owner of the Breckenridge Bookstore, she held classes in the store, among other places. That first year, 12 people enrolled in the fall. Susan was succeeded by Susan Hayes in 1972, and Sue Daley in 1973.

Daley hit the ground running, literally walking all over town, talking to people, selling them on CMC. She met with lodge and restaurant owners, law enforcement and fire department personnel, and local government leaders. The result was not only classes to serve business needs, but Daley also realized there was a need for a permanent home for the center. That materialized when she made the case for the purchase of Breckenridge Town Hall. The historic building at 103 South Harris Avenue had been the town’s high school.

The Town of Breckenridge was wholeheartedly behind the conversion of the former town hall into a community education center. The town’s contract planning company, The Harris Street Group, was key to visioning the process. CMC originally budgeted for conversion of the first floor of the gymnasium and observation gallery. The community agreed to use the money to rough in the second floor as well, and fundraising and community sweat equity finished the rest.

A volunteer crew took all the lodge’s carpeting which was then installed on the second floor of the “new” center.

Volunteers—from local politicians to CEOs—rolled up their sleeves and pitched in. Fundraising came in all forms. Daley came up with the idea for an auction that featured local officials going to the highest bidders for a variety of tasks from hauling garbage to washing cars.

Keystone donated the soon-to-be-demolished Moon Stone Lodge to CMC, with the condition that CMC staff had to come and get what they wanted. A volunteer crew, led by Assistant Director Gary Dutmers, took all the lodge’s carpeting which was then installed on the second floor of the “new” center along with most of the lodge’s toilets and sinks. When the building was torn down, what hadn’t been reused was sold to a salvage company to fund the new center.

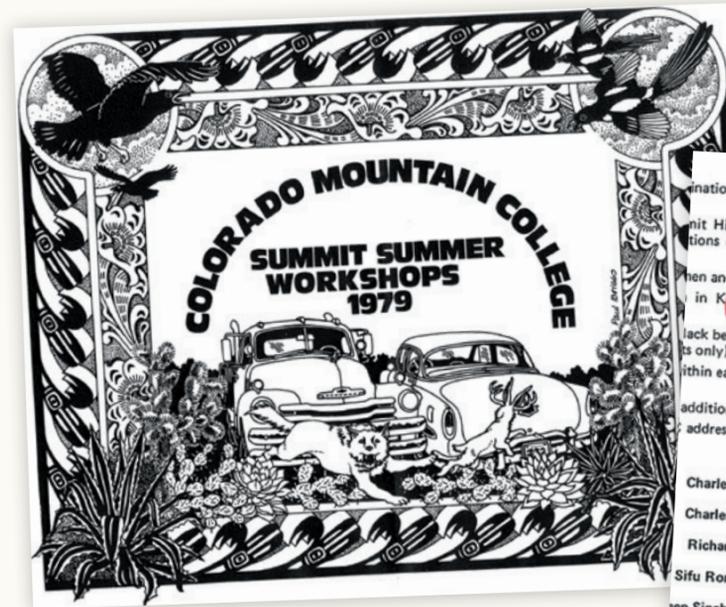
The front portion of the new CMC Breckenridge Center was still occupied by town staff during the remodeling. That portion was renovated soon after the town moved, including the basement police headquarters. A bit of a problem ensued when it was discovered that they had neglected to move the evidence locker.

CMC moved into its new quarters in 1978. The building featured classrooms, an office, a theater, an art gallery, and the town’s public library. With the benefits of its own classrooms, Summit County grew quickly to rival Glenwood Springs as the largest enrollment center in the college. That fall, 140 different classes were offered through Summit County Continuing Education.

Ellen Manchester was the first full-time faculty member that Daley hired at Breckenridge. The only place she could afford to rent was outside of town. It was winter and her car broke down so she found an out-of-the-way corner in the CMC gallery where she could roll out a sleeping bag. Once, when President Gann visited the center, he said to Manchester, “Ellen, I see you here so much, it’s almost like you live here.” Manchester and Daley had no comment.

The CMC Breckenridge Center also sponsored programs such as the Rephotographic Survey Project. This grant-funded endeavor assigned professionals and students to meticulously re-photograph iconic Western landscapes first documented by William Henry Jackson and other Western photographers in the 1870s. The project culminated with a book, *Second View: The Rephotographic Survey Project*. Because of the national attention, the Breckenridge Center became the home of summer photography workshops that, coupled with other summer programs, drew faculty and students from across the country. Allen Ginsberg taught a writers’ workshop class in poetry; J. Ross Baughman, a Pulitzer Prize winner, taught photography. Paul Stookey, from folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary, led a workshop.

The summer workshops helped put Breckenridge on the map as a year-round resort—not just a ski area—and were supported by businesses such as lodging companies which donated their unused summer inventory for guest instructor housing. As in Vail, CMC became an economic driver in Breckenridge’s nascent summer resort market.



Summit Summer Workshop schedule, 1979

July 9 - 20	SALT KILN BUILDING	Staff
July 9 - 20	3 credits	
July 9 - 20	HANDBUILT CERAMICS	Dennis Clive
July 23-27	3 credits	
July 23-27	PRIMITIVE CERAMIC WORKSHOP	Alan Bell
July 23-27	3 credits	
August 4 - 11	3 credits	
August 4 - 11	WRITER'S WORKSHOP	Copper Mountain
August 4 - 11	Copper Mountain resort will host the third annual Writer's Workshop which will bring together working writers and specialists in an informal workshop/seminar format. These writers will work with students, and lecture on particular approaches to contemporary literature. Visiting faculty will include:	
	I. WILLIAM BERRY - "Getting your work published"	
	BOB HOLLINGSWORTH - "Newswriting"	
	ALLEN GINSBERG - "Poetry Reading"	
	ABBY RAND - "Travel and Feature Writing"	
	ROBERT J. PUGEL - "Poetry"	
	RICHARD PRICE - "Novels"	
July 6, 7, 8	ALTERNATIVES. . .Man, Health and Future	Copper Mountain
July 6, 7, 8	This intensive 2½ day seminar is intended to explore alternatives to conventional health care and traditional means of be-	
July 6, 7, 8	1.5 credits	



## HUNTING SEASON

In the fall of 1976, CMC Eagle Director Beth Kubly walked down the town's main street to check on the progress of the building that was being remodeled for CMC classrooms, "only to find a couple of deer hanging from the joists... hunting season."

## CARBONDALE

Carbondale and Basalt classes were run out of the Glenwood Springs Center until 1974, when Clair Kerr opened an office in a trailer at Third and Main streets in Carbondale. From there she administered satellite classes in Basalt, El Jebel, and Redstone.

Kerr convened a 12-member community advisory board which included locals Joe Blanc, Hank Busby, Carol Craven, Wilma Gann, Ernie Gianinetti, John Holden, Paul Lappala, Laurie Loeb, Paula Mechau, Chuck Newell, Wallace Parker, and Roz Turnbull. With suggestions from the board, the Carbondale Center offered 33 classes ranging from sociology to venison processing. Also offered were academic classes required for an associate degree.

**“The only notice we had of students approaching was to see their feet through the basement window.”**

– Shirley Bowen

Debra Burleigh, student services counselor at the Carbondale Center, remembered that in the early days, classes were held at the elementary school in the evenings. “Students complained of getting stuck in the little desks designed for third-graders, while other students attending classes above the Nugget [a popular downtown bar] complained of smelling hamburger grease.”

Shirley Bowen took over as director in 1976, coming from East Campus in Leadville. By then, the center had moved to a space below a dentist's office. “The only notice we had of students approaching was to see their feet through the basement window,” she recalled.

## RIFLE

Rifle's continuing education center began modestly in 1972, with Robert Wamsley running around town to find a space, “any space where we could fit eight to 10 people and some folding chairs,” he recalled. That could mean a store front, a church basement, the local library, or someone's living room. “The pickin's were pretty slim,” Wamsley said.

In the first couple of years, hundreds of people signed up for classes. “We didn't make a dime,” he said. But the program kept growing. The first offerings were basic education and vocational classes.

In 1975, continuing education had grown out of its two-rooms-and-a-folding-chair office in downtown Rifle. CMC opened discussions with the RE-2 school district to lease a building on Railroad Avenue. CMC and the school district reached an agreement, and extensive remodeling work began. The doors opened on the West Garfield County Center in 1978.

The new building was a big step up, with nine classrooms, two offices, and a gym. Classes were offered in New Castle, Silt, and Parachute, as well as Rifle. The offerings that year included 10 vocational/technical, 15 academic, five basic skills, and six recreational and avocational courses.

## THE THIRD CAMPUS

As continuing education grew, with offices located in every county by the mid-1970s, the college changed the name to community education, in recognition of its true community-based focus. Community education continued to be the largest arm of the college with the highest enrollment. It also had a collegewide reach and interaction that the original residential campuses sometimes lacked—coordination. Although classes and programs were focused on each community, the community education directors had constant interaction with each other. They exchanged ideas for classes, teachers and equipment.

One of the programs exemplifying this communication across sites was the emergency medical technician program and Red Cross first aid classes. CMC was the source for training lifeguards, ambulance personnel, hospital personnel, police officers, mountain rescue, and rafting guides, with programs in first aid, CPR, water safety instruction and eventually emergency medical technology. Each of those courses required that students demonstrate their skill on an expensive plastic manikin called Resusci Anne—and the college owned only one. Resusci Anne™ rode the Greyhound bus virtually every day while center staff sometimes scrambled to plan for closed passes and other travel obstacles.

By 1975, Steve Mills was hired as collegewide director and Rick Bolin as assistant director of community education. They facilitated the collegewide approach to programs, curriculum, registration, and documentation of student enrollment numbers, which provided reimbursement to CMC from the state. The central administration also originated some programs



In response to steady growth, CMC leased and remodeled a former school building on Railroad Avenue in Rifle. Photo: Doug Stewart

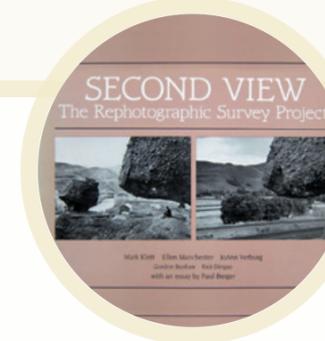
and services that supported the local offices. One of those programs was adult basic education (ABE), which included the general education development (GED) program and English as a second language (ESL).

As a result of surveys and other evaluations, community education leaders saw the need to develop a districtwide ABE program. Ron Limoges, a teacher on West Campus (originally hired as the janitor for the Glenwood Springs Center), was selected to direct the program. Limoges hired Alexandra Yajko (formerly Eeda Wanatowicz) as his assistant. Within 18 months, the ABE program had the largest enrollment in the state. For many adult students, it was their first encounter with formal education in many years. Ron, Alexandra, and an army of teachers taught in churches, living rooms, and wherever students felt comfortable. ABE and ESL classes were the first to serve the growing Latino population.

As course offerings increased and the number of students grew, it was apparent there was a need for student services and counseling. The vast majority of community education students were adults, and their counseling needs weren't quite the same as traditional-aged full-time students. Some needed assistance with pursuing a degree or arranging credits for transfer. Some needed training to prepare for a job or career change, and some needed assistance with understanding what opportunities were available. To accommodate these adult learners, community education received a grant from the Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education. Community education created the Outreach Adult Counseling and Information System (OACIS). David Beyer was hired as the OACIS director and developed a system to provide adult counseling services across the district.



In Carbondale, CMC offered a true community college experience, with learning locations all over town.



## THE REPHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Ellen Manchester came to CMC Breckenridge in the summer of 1976. A photohistorian and curator, she built a nationally recognized program of photography classes, visiting artist workshops, and exhibitions. Manchester, Mark Klett, and JoAnn Verburg founded the Rephotographic Survey in 1977, an ambitious project that revisited the sites of photographs made by the great geologic survey photographers of the American West in the 1860s and 1870s. The project was supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, one of the first of its kind to a community college. In-kind materials and equipment were donated by the Polaroid Corporation.

The team traveled around the West, throughout Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, locating the sites of the pioneer photographers William Henry Jackson, Timothy O'Sullivan, and J.K. Hilliers. Comparative photographs were made at the exact location of the original photograph, at the same time of year and the same time of day. The images quickly became recognized for their technical precision and accuracy. In addition, they illustrated the environment, both natural and man-made, as it existed over a century later.

The team found some sites that had changed little over time, and others that were almost unrecognizable.

Feature stories about the project were published in *Life* magazine, *Harper's*, and *Scientific American*. A book, *Second View: The Rephotographic Survey Project*, was published by New Mexico University Press in 1984.

“The district, on the whole, is one of the most rapidly developing areas of Colorado. There is an aura of excitement and development in some locations in the district not unlike the gold and silver rush days.”

– Citizens Advisory Committee



# Citizens' Advice



**COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE**

In anticipation of what looked to be a banner school year of 1969–70, the administration had called in a group of local folks which it dubbed the Citizens Advisory Committee. Its mission was to “recommend the best approach for the orderly expansion of both Glenwood Springs and Leadville campuses of Colorado Mountain College.”

It included representatives from each of the five counties in the college district: Earl Dungan of Leadville, Walter Gates of Carbondale, Dr. Nels Sullivan of Leadville, Richard Martin of Carbondale, Gary Swallow of Rifle, D.E. Johnson of Eagle, Ted Poliac of Vail, Dan Rule of Eagle, John Healy of Breckenridge, John McGowan of Dillon, Donald Stewart of Glenwood Springs, George Culbreath of Dillon, John Huebinger of Aspen, and Paul Martin of Aspen.

The governing committee laid out the advisory group’s mission: to recommend steps for expansion of the campuses, the addition of new faculty, and how to pay for these improvements. Although President Gann assured the advisory committee he would not try to influence their decisions and recommendations, he apparently had a plan in mind.

Two issues continued to plague the school. The college had paid back only a small portion of the debt incurred with the issue of the revenue bonds which would become due in April 1970. And the debate



John Vanderhoof, Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, and governor of Colorado from 1973 to 1975. Photo courtesy Don Vanderhoof

### John Vanderhoof gave an impassioned plea to the committee to move the campus from Spring Valley.

over the location of West Campus still simmered.

The advisory committee was charged to decide if the revenue bonds should be refinanced and extended for another period of time, or if they should be paid off by a new issue of general obligation bonds, which would have a longer pay-back period. With more secure financing in place, the college could contract to build permanent structures on the campuses.

The advisory committee was also required to make a recommendation about whether or not West Campus should be moved to another location. It had until July to submit its recommendations.

Debate became heated as opposing points of view were aired. John Vanderhoof, a native of Glenwood Springs, and the Speaker of the Colorado House of

Representatives, who would later become governor of Colorado from 1973 to 1975, gave an impassioned plea to the committee to move the campus.

"If it's not moved people will petition to join the state system," he said.

Gann weighed in as well. Donation of the land and the investment in buildings and labor to create the campus would count for a "substantial loss" to the college if the campus moved, and the money spent would have to be written off.

After due deliberation, the Citizens Advisory Committee made what could be seen as a compromise decision. West Campus would not be moved unless a community within the Garfield RE-1 School District was willing to relocate the campus, at its cost. Any interested community must submit a plan by August 1. In addition, at that June 27 meeting the committee voted to recommend the college authorize an issue of general obligation bonds that would be used to pay off the revenue bonds and fund new construction.

A story in the *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel* on July 30 noted that chip sealing was underway on the road leading into West Campus.

Construction had also begun on a student center. The *Sentinel* opined that such activity suggested the administration was committed to the Spring Valley campus, and it was unlikely the college could afford to move.

The governing committee accepted the recommendation of the Citizens Advisory Committee. August 1 had come and gone without a proposal from an interested Garfield County community. Governing Committee Chairman Pat Harvey said the decision would allow the college "to get on with the business of education."

With that thorny issue out of the way for the present, the Citizens **Action** Committee got on with its mission, to come up with a useable plan for growth. The committee's report sketched the state of the district and underscored the need for a college in the heart of the Rockies. The district, the report said, now had a population of about 30,000, and was one of the fastest-growing regions of the state. Many of the small communities in the district were poor, and their residents could not afford



### ISAAC NEWTON CHALLENGE

This annual gravity-fueled event started around 1974, running through 1977. "I can recall the early years, when this truly outstanding and unique sports event was held at Ski Cooper, wrote Angie Bomier of student personnel services in the Timberline Trails newsletter. "Snowfall was generous, the Forest Service didn't intervene, liquid refreshment was abundant, and open class entries were numerous, colorful and controversial."

Ski Cooper staff attended in force and came equipped with portable bars, pit crews, and bleachers. Improbable contraptions hurtled down the slopes. One memorable homemade conveyance was a bathtub on skis. The Beer Slalom was the last event of the day. One year, "an esteemed CMC professor won the overall trophy . . . based entirely on the fact that he was the only entrant still able to participate in the final event of the day!" wrote Bomier.



The student staff of radio station KCMK on West Campus brought rock 'n' roll to the airwaves.



East Campus in Leadville fostered a more traditional student body.

higher education for their children. What the people of this rural mountain region needed were realistic, useable education programs that led to employment, a head start on a four-year degree, and continuing education opportunities.

East Campus in Leadville had a healthy student population and strong community support. The advisory group recommended that it should focus on serving in-district and in-state students. At the time, the majority were local students, many of them employed by Climax Molybdenum. However, the residence halls were less than half full. The report recommended the dorms be sold, and work started on constructing permanent buildings, especially a student center and faculty housing. All was dependent on enrollment.

Permanent site development at West Campus was



Photo: Walter Gallacher

### JACK SNOBBLE

*Outdoor Adventurer*

The great outdoors of the central Rocky Mountains was a natural classroom for CMC. It was right outside the door, and instructors took advantage of the challenges and lessons it offered.

Jack Snobble, coordinator of physical activities at West Campus, was a natural for adventure learning. A graduate of Dartmouth, he had moved with his wife Barbara to Carbondale in the mid-1950s. Jack took a job at Colorado Rocky Mountain School (CRMS) in Carbondale where he taught outdoor sports—kayaking, Nordic skiing, and wilderness backpacking. He had a background teaching survival courses for Outward Bound, which pioneered experiential learning to build character and teamwork through wilderness courses.

Snobble brought this philosophy to CRMS and then to CMC in the early 1970s. He also attracted like-minded teachers, such as Roger Paris (Rog t Par ), a world champion canoeist who rode his bike to campus daily from near Redstone.

From its inception, CMC decided against traditional college team sports and promoted instead what the mountains had to offer. Snobble put the program together: backpacking in mountains and desert canyons, horse-packing, rock climbing, whitewater rafting, and cross-country skiing. These became the foundation of outdoor learning that would continue to be a hallmark of the CMC experience.



The “temporary” modular buildings at West Campus would be used for more than 25 years.

## They suggested a private developer build a shopping center, recreation center, and faculty housing on both campuses.



On the governing board for 12 years, Carbondale rancher Richard Martin helped guide the college through its early struggles. Photo: Walter Gallacher

CMC was also finally on firm financial footing. Property tax revenues were growing thanks to a higher assessed valuation of the district’s real estate and climbing ski resort values.

A major step toward financial stability was a successful election on October 25, 1971, to turn the short-term revenue bonds into longer-running, lower-interest general obligation bonds. Just a portion of the interest had been paid on the original bonds, which were coming due in April of 1972. In a letter to the bondholders, Dr. Gann explained that the original plan had been to repay the revenue bonds with tuition and other fees. But enrollment for the first year was overestimated, causing a significant budget shortfall.

In an open letter published by the *Glenwood Post* the day before the election, Richard Martin of the governing committee spoke out against accusations by the anti-tax watchdog group, the TriCounty Taxpayers Association, which asserted that the college was financially irresponsible. The

group had been vocal in its opposition to the election question. Martin called them to task, saying the college had the highest enrollment since it opened. Martin also said the governing committee had compared CMC salaries with similar colleges and found them on par. He pointed out that the employees of the college had agreed voluntarily to forego any salary increases for a year.

Despite pushback from the taxpayers’ association, the voters, including 18-year-olds voting for the first time, approved a plan to issue the general obligation bonds for \$2.56 million, sufficient to pay off the revenue bonds.

Perhaps partly as a reaction to the unhappy taxpayers, the college administration promised no new buildings and no tax increase.

CMC had also taken on the daunting task of proving to the Colorado State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education that it was indeed providing the appropriate curriculum and physical framework for its students. Representatives of the board had made several visits to the two campuses and, approving of what they saw, granted the college the approval of the first step in the accreditation process, under the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. With this recognition as a legitimate junior college, CMC would now be able to go after much-needed state and federal funding.

## EAST VS. WEST

The East and West campuses soon developed their own personalities, drawn from the students who went to school there. An April 1972 feature story in the *Denver Post Empire Magazine* pointed out some startling, if not completely accurate, differences. The two campuses, it said, differed in curriculum, in the type of student and in the communities where they were located. They were, the story said, almost separate schools.

East Campus, in Leadville, was predominantly a locals’ school. The majority of students were employed at Climax Molybdenum, which paid, at least in part, for occupational training. There was more ethnic diversity, as well, with a mix of white, Hispanic, black, and Native Americans, and even a group of young men from the Mariana Islands of the South Pacific. The average age of Leadville students was 29, and they were “dedicated students,” the story said.

“A working man who attends school after his shift is making a considerable personal and financial sacrifice,” said Don Hix, vice president of East Campus, who was quoted in the story. He said Leadville had considerable “spirit” because of the support of the town’s biggest employer, Climax. About 60 percent of the students were enrolled in vocational programs, including mining technology, electronics, business management, secretarial skills, auto mechanics, drafting, and metals technology. A new program introduced in the fall was ski area technology, providing a good fit with several major ski areas nearby.

**“A working man who attends school after his shift is making a considerable personal and financial sacrifice.”**  
– Don Hix



## RODEO CLUB

West Campus Rodeo Club competed locally and regionally. In 1971, the club flew to competitions in Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado.

also recommended. Enrollment had grown beyond the capacity of the existing interim buildings. The committee also advised that the college sell the residence halls to a private company. Vocational, academic, library, and administration buildings should be constructed. All this was to be financed with a new bond issue and possibly a higher mill levy.

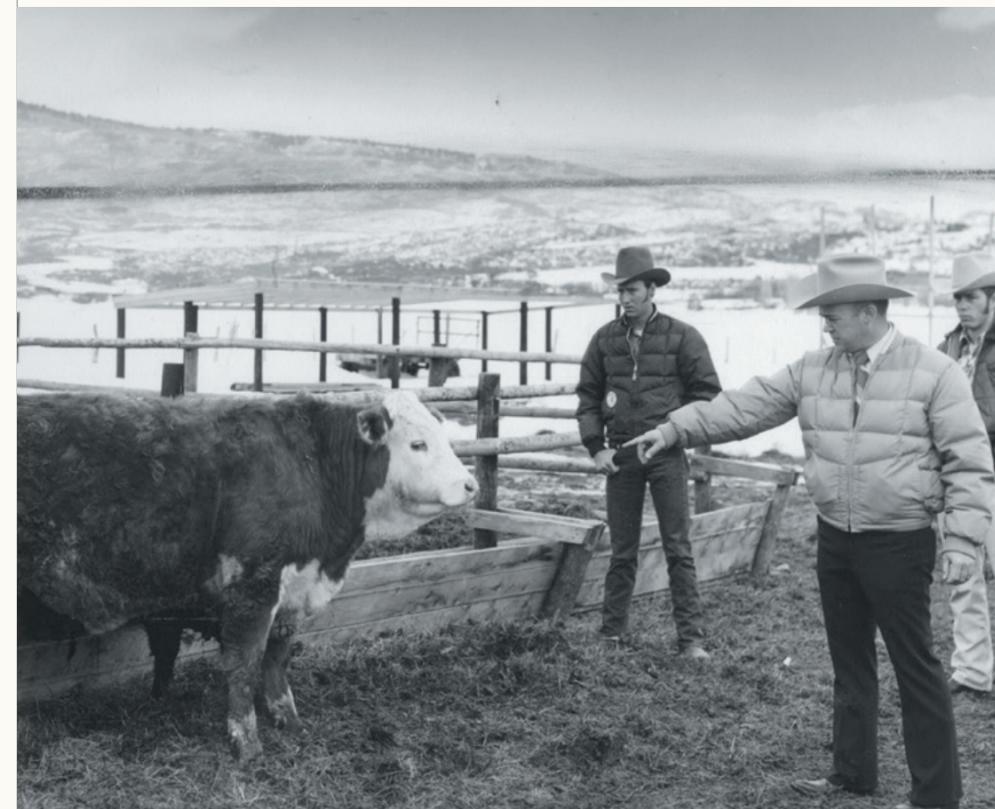
Private enterprise was apparently on the minds of the citizens’ group. They suggested a private developer build a shopping center, recreation center, and faculty housing on both campuses. Nothing came of that suggestion at that time.

## FIRM FOOTING

After the rocky first years, CMC was poised for growth. A special section of the *Glenwood Springs Sage Reminder* in March of 1971 lauded CMC’s success. Its occupational education program had the second largest enrollment in the state, the paper reported. Programs at the two campuses included animal health technology, building construction, and farm and ranch management. The natural resource management program was unique in the country.



East Campus in Leadville, surrounded by some of Colorado’s highest summits.



Bill Wright taught in the farm and ranch management program at West Campus, which was created in response to local needs at the time. Photo: Bob McGill

West Campus had a different profile. It had a reputation for “hippies and drug addicts,” the story said. Located 10 miles south of Glenwood Springs, the relatively remote campus was a more typical small town junior college. The students were younger than those in Leadville, averaging 19 years old. And most were from out

## Graduation ceremonies at each of the campuses were good indicators of the cultural divide that separated them.

of the district or from other states. According to the *Denver Post*, there were more coeds [female students] than at Leadville. Their clothing and hair were “modish and flamboyant.” Many of them were there to take two years of basic college courses in order to transfer to a four-year college.

Graduation ceremonies at each of the campuses the previous year were good indicators of the cultural divide that separated them. At West Campus there were no caps and gowns and the atmosphere was relaxed. On the other hand, East Campus graduation was all “pomp and ceremony,” with the ritual clothing and music fanfares. “The awarding of a college diploma is a very big event for a man who, had he looked ahead, would never have been anything but a mucker in a mine,” Dr. Gann was quoted as saying.

He said the college offered a firm anchor. “So many young people today are rootless, aimless, just drifting. Many come from broken homes, many have no home in the sense that you and I did. Many seem to find a home here,” he said.

Delaplane recalled the culture of West Campus more as a sign of the times. Financial advisers suggested the college recruit out-of-state students who would be charged higher tuition than in-district or in-state students. “That turned out to be an easy sell when we started promoting outside of our area,” recalled Delaplane. “It was the 1960s, and a lot of people were wanting to get out of going to Vietnam and wanted to get into college. A lot



Staff and faculty had extracurricular challenges as the sixties revolution invaded rural western Colorado.



Professor of Mining Technology Harry McFarland and an unidentified woman welcomed a group of young men who found their way from the Mariana Islands to East Campus at Leadville. They were introduced to the community by President Gann at a town picnic held by the chamber of commerce, Jaycees, and Lions Club to welcome CMC students at the start of a new school year.

of others who wanted to come to ski came [to CMC]. We got a whole influx of people who were trying to get away from going to the Army and a lot of people who wanted to come and play.”

But on campus there were also what Delaplane called the “good, solid rancher kids” and kids from town. It was an interesting and sometimes volatile mix. There was tension between “the cowboys and the hippies,” said Delaplane. He credited communications and humanities Professor Gene Minor with diffusing much of that tension. He brought the two groups together and, got them to discuss their differences.

## There was tension between “the cowboys and the hippies.”

“He just did a marvelous job. He explained what was going on in society, explained what was going on with the war [in Vietnam]. He explained the whole counter-culture movement. He explained how important it was to have the basis of agriculture. Our faculty really saved the day.”

### THE LONG WALK & GREATER VISIBILITY

In 1971, over the Memorial Day weekend, Gann pulled off a considerable public relations coup. Gann, Don Hix, vice president of East Campus, plus a handful of instructors and students from Glenwood Springs and Leadville, departed East Campus intent on walking and skiing across the Continental Divide to West Campus in Spring Valley. The “Long Walk” was the brainchild of Dr. Gann, who thought of the 78-mile excursion as a fitting way to advertise the college—the only one in the nation to straddle the Continental Divide. The group also collected contributions, amounting to about \$100, for scholarships. Gann hoped it would be an annual event.

The group included John and Chris Clifford, instructors at East Campus;



A *Denver Post* story described the students of West Campus as having clothing and hair that was “modish and flamboyant.”



Professor Gene Minor brought together divergent student groups, creating an environment for understanding differences.

Gary Graves, area vocational guidance and placement coordinator; Chris Koonce, son of governing committee chairman Harold Koonce; students Becky Ambler and Jeff Lewis; and Bobby Gann, Elbie’s 10-year-old-son.

The hikers took off from East Campus at 1:00 p.m. Friday, May 28, headed to Turquoise Lake at the foot of the mountains. They hiked 12 miles up the old grade of the Midland Railroad and stopped at the abandoned Carlton Tunnel where they set up camp. The next day they traded hiking boots for cross-country skis and made the 15-mile trek over the Continental Divide at Hagerman Pass.

“It was a lot harder than I thought it would be,” said Bobby Gann, who later settled in Rifle. While the rest of the group had on skis and were gliding down the west side of the pass, he was on snowshoes, walking at a considerably slower pace. “It was an adventure,” he recalled.

They made camp at the Diamond J Ranch on the Fryingpan River. Sunday found the hikers at the head of Ruedi Reservoir where they boarded kayaks for a nine-mile trip across the water.

On the following Monday morning they achieved their goal when they were met at West Campus by a group of well-wishers and the media.

In addition to seeking better visibility in the media, college leadership increased recruiting efforts outside the district. In 1972, staff members took turns traveling around Colorado to recruit students. The next year, Linda Hargrave was hired and filled this role until 1976. Barb Edwards then took the position and recruited successfully in Colorado and out of state.

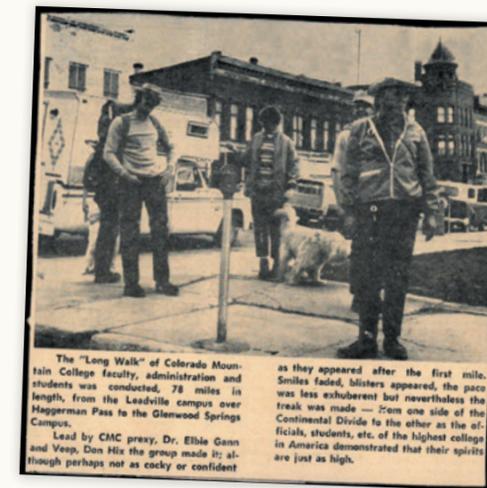
The only promotional materials were two catalogs, one for each residential campus. Edwards hauled boxes of catalogs on her trips, with instructions

from each campus to make sure she recruited especially for them more than the other. Despite the internal competition, these efforts greatly increased tuition revenue and improved CMC’s name recognition beyond the district. Edwards led recruitment efforts until 1993, when she was hired to be director of admissions for the University of Colorado at Denver, ultimately becoming assistant vice chancellor for enrollment.

### TEN YEARS

When Colorado Mountain College marked its 10th anniversary in 1977, the *Denver Post* applauded the college for being “one of the youngest and fastest growing community colleges in the state. It boasts the highest higher education in the country at 10,200 feet.” And it remained one of only four independent community colleges in Colorado. By that time enrollment, according to the *Post*, was mixed, with 85 percent of the students coming from within the district, 11 percent from Colorado, and only four percent from out of state.

Now, at the end of its first decade, the college had achieved hard-won financial stability. It had retired its bonds, and had a capital reserve fund that enabled it to construct some



The “Long Walk” of Colorado Mountain College faculty, administration and students was conducted, 78 miles in length, from the Leadville campus over Hagerman Pass to the Glenwood Springs Campus. Lead by CMC presy, Dr. Elbie Gann and Veep, Don Hix the group made it; although perhaps not as cocky or confident as they appeared after the first mile. Smiles faded, blisters appeared, the pace was less exuberant but nevertheless the trek was made — from one side of the Continental Divide to the other as the officials, students, etc. of the highest colleges in America demonstrated that their spirits are just as high.

Media coverage was good for the “Long Walk”—78 miles from East Campus in Leadville to West Campus near Glenwood Springs, led by President Gann.



Local ranch kids enrolled in the animal health technology program that trained veterinary assistants.



Photo: Beth Zukowski

## RON CARSTEN

### Pioneering Veterinarian

Ron Carsten blazed an unusual path to his career as a longtime Glenwood Springs veterinarian. It began, somewhat unconventionally, with a two-year degree in animal health technology from Colorado Mountain College, where he earned an associate degree in 1978. Most graduates go on to become veterinary technicians, assisting a veterinarian in their practice. Instead, Carsten became one of the few CMC graduates to pursue veterinary school and earn a doctorate of veterinary medicine from Colorado State University.

But his life's work didn't stop there. After opening a small animal practice in Glenwood Springs, he decided he could do more for his patients. "I felt frustration not being able to cure everything with conventional medical methods. It stimulated me to look for other solutions," he said in a story posted on the CMC 50th Anniversary website.

Carsten trained in acupuncture in 1991, and incorporated it into his practice at Birch Tree Animal Hospital in Glenwood Springs. Understandably, "It was viewed with some skepticism," he said. But his animal patients responded so well that people sought him out to treat their pets.

He credited his foundation at CMC with helping him through the rigorous training at CSU, especially the clinical experience. While others in the CSU program were learning the hands-on skills, he could focus on other aspects of veterinary medicine.

In keeping with CMC's philosophy of lifelong learning, Carsten continued to further his education with the study of holistic and conventional veterinary care.



New student apartments at East Campus provided more attractive housing options. Photo: Doug Stewart

permanent buildings on the two campuses. West Campus now had a student center and the Quigley Library, named for the ranching family that donated land at Spring Valley. The Learning Resource Center, as it was originally called, was an innovative passive solar building that was at the cutting edge of college architecture at the time. East Campus in Leadville saw the construction of Rattling Jack, which housed a welding shop, and the Crown Point building that contained a gym, classrooms, an auto mechanics shop, and a snowcat garage.

East Campus had new residential apartments, a five-building complex of one- and two-bedroom units: the Fairview, Snowbird, Campbird, Morning Star and Evening Star apartments. In 1978, a college center was completed, later named the Coronado Café.

Under the leadership of Janet Landry, in 1977 CMC entered into a 20-plus-year agreement with the Aspen



The Learning Resource Center at West Campus was later renamed Quigley Library for one of the ranching families that donated land for the campus. The innovative passive solar design by Jim Gustafson was cited by the American Institute of Architects for "establishing future directions" in college architecture.



Janet Landry formed a partnership with the Aspen School District to build a home for CMC, shared by Aspen High School. Photo: Doug Rhinehart

RE-1 school district to build a 14,000-square-foot building next to Aspen High School. The high school used the classrooms during the day and CMC took it over for night classes, creating a vibrant environment for continuing education near the base of Aspen Highlands Ski Area.

The college's status as a firmly established educational institution was cemented when the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools awarded accreditation in 1974.

Two years earlier CMC had received a Ford Foundation grant for \$86,311 to investigate ways to improve learning. That same year, CMC also received an additional donation of 64.5 acres from the Lake County Board of County Commissioners, with the proviso that no structure be built on the land, but that it would be used for educational purposes.



Dr. F. Dean Lillie, third president of Colorado Mountain College.

## GANN STEPS DOWN

In 1977, after nine years as president, Elbie Gann stepped down. He had accepted a job as the superintendent of the Hydaburg City School, in Hydaburg, Alaska, population 350, where 90 percent of the students were Haida Native Americans. Looking back on his tenure as CMC's second president, Gann told the *Glenwood Post*

he was proud the school had accomplished three important goals: accreditation, financial stability and community support.

He'd had his share of challenges, chiefly fending off state and federal intervention, which would have meant loss of autonomy. He felt strongly that CMC should remain outside the state community college system, although joining it was inevitable, he said. Benefits for the school making that move, he said, would include state financing for all construction, and residents of the district would be relieved of their CMC District property taxes.

"That's the bait," he said, [to lure the college into the state system.] "You kind of sell your soul for a buck."

About a month into his tenure at Hydaburg, Gann was killed in a bush plane crash.

Stepping into the president's role was Dr. F. Dean Lillie, who left his position as president of the Colorado Community College System. Lillie and Gann had been good friends, and Lillie wanted everyone to know that his approach to governing



Despite the distance from Glenwood Springs, student activities thrived at West Campus.



Student lounge at East Campus in Leadville.

the college would be similar. "I don't plan to come in and shake the hell out of things," he told a *Glenwood Post* reporter.

There were concerns among the members of the governing committee, faculty and staff. "Dean and Elbie were very good friends," said Steve Mills in a 2016 interview. "Dean was the head of the community college system. I was absolutely convinced, as many others were, when Dean came, that it was the end of CMC as a district college. Dean would just fold it into the state system. As it turned out, quite to the contrary, I believe now that Dean and what he did to save the college during those days, is the reason that CMC is not in the state system."

**"I believe now that Dean and what he did to save the college during those days, is the reason that CMC is not in the state system."**

**– Steve Mills**



## ROBIN SUTHERLAND

### Concert Pianist

Robin Sutherland made a fabulous career in music, serving more than 40 years as the principal pianist for the San Francisco Symphony, coaching young players in the symphony's youth orchestra, and co-directing the Telluride Chamber Music Festival.

In the 1970s, in between studies at the Juilliard School and the San Francisco Conservatory, his vitae included two years with CMC. It was a time when a young pianist and a new college could set their own tempo.

Sutherland had withdrawn from Juilliard because his chosen teacher was too aged to see him through. Having recently graduated from Colorado Rocky Mountain School in Carbondale, he returned to the area to "sit and think a minute."

He was naturally drawn to CMC. "The minute I got there, it was as though my life had been transformed in so many ways," Sutherland recalled.

George Stricker, director of continuing education, had just purchased some pianos, and proposed an artist-in-residence program. Sutherland agreed, taking on piano students and performing concerts with CMC music instructor and pianist Betsy Schenck.

"There was a tremendous spirit afoot," he said. "Those of us involved with the school would have done anything for it, because it was amazing."

Sutherland also enrolled as a student, serving as student government vice president and, in 1972, earning an associate degree.

When he started, some classes met in doublewide trailers and dorms were in modular buildings. By the time he graduated, West Campus had its first permanent building, a library.

Sutherland went on to study at the San Francisco Conservatory, and within a year, San Francisco Symphony Conductor Seiji Ozawa appointed him as the orchestra's first-ever principal pianist. Hundreds of performances later, Sutherland continued to dazzle audiences.

"I am right where I need to be," he said of his life and career in San Francisco.

His interim at CMC informed that success. It was, he said, "one of the most positive, transformative times of my life."

“...a college from absolutely nothing but a dream, the rarified mountain air, and plenty of blood, sweat and tears.”

– Lucy Bogue

## Opportunity and Crisis



Colorado Mountain College headed into the 1980s on the tail of the booming 1970s. Financially, the college was secure. It enjoyed an excellent reputation with the communities within the district. In 1980, an opportunity arose that extended the college's reach northward.

### LUCY'S DREAM

Lucile Bogue was descended from a pioneer family, raised on Missouri Heights above Glenwood Springs, and graduated from Garfield County High School. In the 1950s, George Tolles and Lucile Bogue had been teaching at the Lowell Whiteman School,

a private college-preparatory school in Steamboat Springs. Both eventually went their separate ways, Tolles to the foreign service with the US State Department and Bogue to start a college.

Tolles later recalled that Lucy wrote to him in 1964, saying that she was opening a four-year “international” liberal arts college in Steamboat Springs. She asked if he would come teach there. He couldn't resist her offer and came back to the small mountain community. At the start, Yampa Valley College enrolled 150 students, many of them from countries around the world. There was no campus per se, and classes were held all over town.

The college “made quite an impact on Steamboat Springs,

which at that time was still a rather provincial small town,” Tolles said. It did, however, have a couple of features that set it apart. Besides the Whiteman School, Steamboat Springs was also home to the Perry-Mansfield summer camp that since 1913 had offered dance and theater programs. And, it boasted Howelsen Hill, a ski jump near town that was a training ground for Olympians.

In 1966, the school built three academic and residential buildings—Willett, Bogue, and Monson halls—that were a hexagonal, clustered design and plan similar to the first buildings on CMC’s East and West campuses. Yampa Valley College was renamed Colorado Alpine College.

That same year, with the college seeming to be firmly established, Bogue left to teach at schools in Japan and California.

But by 1969 the school was in financial trouble. Colorado Alpine College closed its doors. Then a national college,

United States International University, headquartered in San Diego, bought the campus. After six years, it too closed and the three campus buildings were rented out for low-cost employee housing.

“Vandalism was rampant,” Tolles said. “Our excellent library was auctioned off to a college in South Dakota for \$1,500, and a large part of the holdings ended up in two dumpsters. The college was dead.”

In 1978, as USIU was preparing to sell the buildings for apartments, a group of Steamboat Springs businessmen banded together in an effort to save the college. A group of Yampa Valley College founders, including Ev Bristol, John Fetcher, Del Scott, Jim Golden, and Dorothy Wilder, agreed they would do their best to see “Lucy’s Dream”—Colorado Alpine College—remain in town. Under the leadership of Bill Hill, executive director of the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association, they formed the Yampa Valley Foundation and hoped to purchase the campus from USIU. Terms of the agreement reached with USIU required the foundation to assume some of the university’s financial obligations. An initial payment of \$60,000 was due in July 1979, followed by annual payments of \$120,000 on the bonded debt. The problem was, the foundation had no money.

“That was until Bob Adams, owner of Energy Fuels, joined the effort,” Hill wrote in a history of the Steamboat Springs campus. Energy Fuels operated a coal mine about 20 miles southwest of Steamboat Springs. “One Sunday morning, Bob invited John Fetcher, John Ross, and me up to his house on Rabbit Ears Pass for a home-cooked breakfast. I remember him



### WINTER CARNIVAL CAMPUS

Yampa Valley College was built on Woodchuck Hill, site of the first Steamboat Springs Winter Carnival, held in 1914. Colorado Mountain College later took over the YVC campus.

Photo: Tread of Pioneers Museum



Howelsen Hill across from the campus in Steamboat Springs in the 1960s.



Three academic and residence buildings on Woodchuck Hill were designed by local architect Lincoln Jones, who drew from a variety of influences, including Frank Lloyd Wright and the “International Style.”



Bill Hill led the effort to re-establish a local college. He later taught management courses for CMC. Photo: Doug Stewart



Bob Adams, owner of Energy Fuels, contributed the \$60,000 initial payment for the Yampa Valley Foundation to purchase the campus at Steamboat Springs. Photo: Rod Hanna

standing in his kitchen, a spatula in his hand, saying, ‘Okay, guys, how much do you need?’ When I said \$60,000 as a starter, he simply replied, ‘Let’s go for it.’” On May 15, 1979, the foundation assumed control of the campus.

For two years, Hill and the foundation board—Erie Johnson, Olive Morton, Gary Shaw, Rex Pielstick, Ed Hill, Bill Baldwin, Karl Mattlage, Tim Borden, Senator Richard Soash, Jack Eatherton, and other community leaders—got behind the effort.

A series of community meetings were held to hear what residents wanted in the way of higher education. The foundation leaders learned that people wanted a locally controlled and financed community college. In November 1969, Hill appealed to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to establish a community college at the site of Colorado Alpine College. The commission declined.

**“Okay, guys, how much do you need? When I said \$60,000 a starter, he simply replied, ‘Let’s go for it.’”**  
— Bill Hill

After the closing of the Steamboat Springs college, Colorado Northwestern Community College (CNCC) in Rangely had offered outreach classes at the campus. Perhaps the best solution was to join the CNCC district. In February of 1980, the matter was brought as a bill to the state legislature and was defeated.

It was at this point that CMC President Dean Lillie suggested the former college become a third CMC residential campus, which would include much of Routt County in the CMC

District. The proposal was brought before the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education, which approved the idea. A vote of the residents of Routt County was required, and set for the following year. In the meantime, CMC agreed to assume Colorado Alpine College’s financial obligations during the transition period. In July, CMC took over operation of the Steamboat Springs campus and the educational and vocational programs in Routt, Grand, and Jackson counties.

Now the foundation went into high gear, urging Routt County residents to vote in favor of joining the CMC District, and approve an added property tax to finance the college. The vote was set for May 5, 1981. But first, a technicality had to be overcome.

Colorado law stated that local district colleges could only expand to contiguous school districts. This meant the school district in south Routt County

had to approve the new property tax if Steamboat Springs was to also be brought into the CMC District. That was doubtful in ranch-dominated south Routt. Lillie used his connections in Denver to get the law changed to allow votes to be tallied separately for different school districts. That meant the measure could lose in south Routt but win in Steamboat Springs. It became known internally as the “Dean Lillie Law.”

The brilliant strategy worked. Election day saw a large voter turnout.



### LUCILE BOGUE

*Miracle on a Mountain*

Lucy Bogue was a woman with big ideas and a strong spirit to see them through. She came by these qualities honestly, as the descendant of pioneers. Her maternal grandfather walked from Iowa to Leadville in 1880. There he accepted the job of superintendent of schools. Her father’s father settled in Rifle. Bogue was raised on Missouri Heights and graduated from Garfield County High School.

She also settled on a career in education, although it was certainly not a traditional path she followed. In her book, *Miracle on a Mountain*, Bogue told a compelling story that “concerns the creation of a four-year college from absolutely nothing but a dream, the rarified mountain air, and plenty of blood, sweat, and tears.”

Bogue and her husband Art had settled in Steamboat Springs in the 1950s. Although in a remote area of the state, the town had two nationally recognized institutions, the Lowell Whiteman School (a private college-prep school) and the Perry-Mansfield performing arts camp, which since 1913 had offered dance and theater programs in the summer.

Bogue, in her characteristic high-energy style, looked around her and saw a gap in the educational offerings. What Steamboat Springs needed, she thought, was a four-year, liberal arts college that would attract students from Colorado, the United States, and abroad. She lobbied tirelessly, found enthusiastic supporters in town, and traveled widely to high schools in the country to recruit students. She found space in town to hold classes and house the students. On September 23, 1962, Yampa Valley College opened its doors.

By 1966, the school had an actual campus with three buildings built on the same plan as the CMC modular—hexagonal clusters of learning centers surrounded by living areas for the students.

All went well for a couple of years, then Bogue’s health began to fail. She was sent on a forced sabbatical and while she was away in California, the board appointed a new president. The following years saw the increasingly rapid decline of the school, until in 1980 voters of Steamboat Springs and part of Routt County elected to join the CMC District.

Bogue’s vision and her pioneer spirit have left a lasting legacy in what is now a thriving campus in Steamboat Springs.

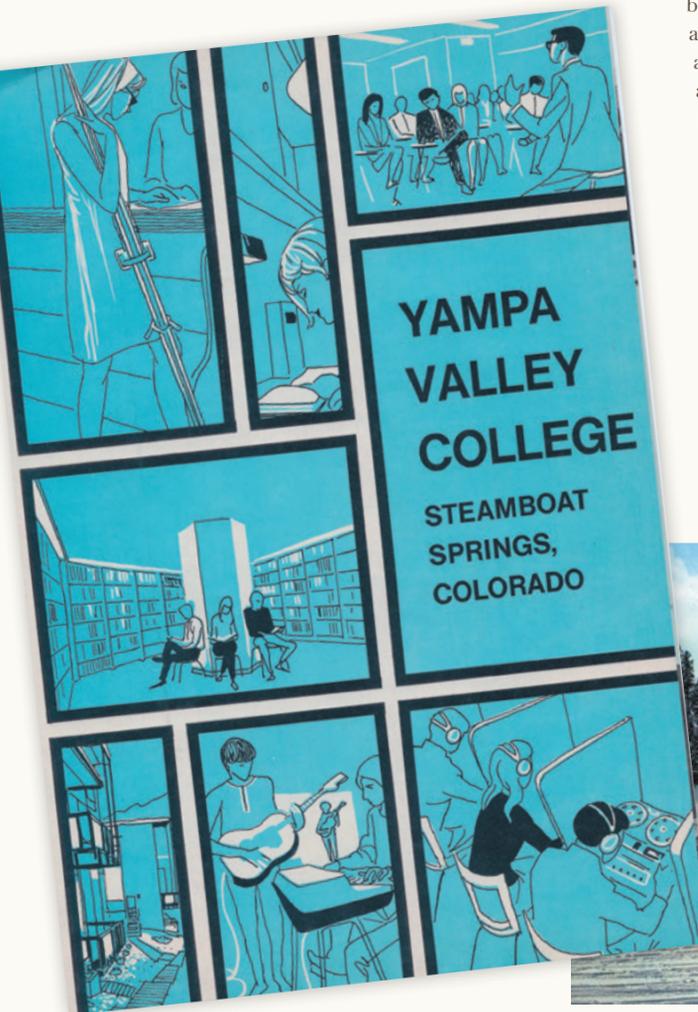




Photo: Walter Gallacher

## GEORGE TOLLES

*Sage of Steamboat Springs*

George Tolles was the common thread for innovative higher education in Steamboat Springs, teaching for more than 30 years and leading seminars well into retirement.

At 87, Tolles still visited CMC's Alpine Campus, enjoying conversations in the dining hall, taking classes, and setting the pace for lifelong learning.

He first came to Steamboat Springs to teach at the Lowell Whiteman School, then left for a U.S. State Department posting to Colombia. That brief diplomatic career ended in 1962 after a Whiteman colleague, Lucile Bogue, sent a tempting telegram.

Bogue was launching the Yampa Valley College and wanted Tolles on the faculty. "So I came back," he said, accepting a post that paid \$3,500 per year.

Tolles taught German, Spanish, history, economics, and political science; classes were held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Tolles traveled to New England to recruit students, using the scenery and ski slopes as a lure.

"Oddly enough, we got a lot of students in those years," he recalled. For students who couldn't get in to the Ivy League, he figured, "Yampa Valley College filled the bill."

Later, after the name changed to Colorado Alpine College, the institution struggled. To maintain an income, Tolles taught in the local public schools. The college folded in 1975.

Tolles and others kept alive the idea of higher education in Steamboat Springs. In 1981, the campus reopened as part of Colorado Mountain College, and Tolles joined the CMC faculty.

Between the two colleges, he taught for more than 30 years. He was awarded two Fulbright Fellowships, one to study citizen action in Berlin and the other to study Islamic law in Pakistan.

**"George's classes were extremely popular," remembered former Campus Dean John Vickery.**

**"We always scheduled them for the largest rooms. They were standing-room only."**

Tolles retired in 1991 with distinction as professor emeritus of arts and sciences. Still active, he led seminars on foreign policy, helping to mold the Alpine Campus into "the center of political discussions and activities."



Top: A new continuing education center in Glenwood Springs won national accolades for its progressive design. Photo: Walter Gallacher  
Bottom: An expensive new center at Cascade Village in Vail later imperiled the college financially.

Steamboat Springs, in the RE-2 school district, passed the issue by a 2-to-1 margin, 803 for and 394 against. South Routt County, in the RE-3 school district, defeated the measure by 144 votes, 388 against to 244 for. Steamboat Springs was now part of the CMC District.

## BOOM AND BUST

In addition to adding another campus, CMC launched an ambitious construction plan. A new continuing education center in Glenwood Springs with a cutting-edge passive solar design opened in 1981. And a new center at Cascade Village in Vail added yet another asset to the college.

The three residential campuses were renamed to better reflect their individual characters. East Campus was renamed Timberline, for its high-altitude setting close to the tree line. West Campus was aptly renamed for Spring Valley, where it was located. In keeping with its original name, the Steamboat Springs campus was now known as Alpine.

As the college continued its expansion, the administration began a two-year reorganization. The driving force was consolidation of operations at the various far-flung sites into a centrally located district office. Administrative functions were computerized and run out of one district office in



Karen Dunbar, from the Glenwood Center, promoted the switch from quarters to semesters in the fall of 1984. Photo: Walter Gallacher



Glenwood Springs. Both the campuses and centers began offering the same slate of courses: academic, vocational and continuing education. An Associate of Science degree was added, and the college made a switch from the quarter to semester credit system to better accommodate students wishing to transfer to four-year colleges.

The Colorado Mountain College district and service area was now 147 miles from east to west, and 178 miles north to south, encompassing

11,959 square miles and including 114,352 residents.

But while the college enjoyed its new expansion, the regional and national economy was already showing signs of stress. The national recession hit Colorado hard, and

## The unexpected closure of Exxon's Colony Project had an immediate effect on the college.

it became the top state for business failures. Although the hard times were not a direct result of the downturn in energy extraction in the state, the industry's slump did take its toll.

Oil shale mining and processing had come into Garfield County like a whirlwind.

In 1980, Exxon was the largest company in the world. It blew into Garfield County with an announcement that it expected to spend \$5 billion on oil shale development. The federal government had granted attractive incentives to companies that set up to mine the oil-bearing rock from the Naval Oil Shale Reserve in western Colorado and eastern Utah. Exxon laid plans for a model worker town at Battlement Mesa which it said would eventually house

25,000 people. CMC bet heavily on the future strength of this revenue source.

In the spring of 1982, business was booming in Garfield County. Then, on Sunday, May 2, Exxon abruptly announced the closure of its Colony Oil Shale Project, immediately putting 2,200 people out of work. Thousands moved away to look for work elsewhere.

On the east side of the district, Leadville was going through its own economic crisis. Prices for molybdenum were dropping as steel production slowed during the recession. Climax Molybdenum Company, the primary employer in Leadville, slowed and finally shut down its operations in 1987, putting several thousand people out of work. Leadville had the highest unemployment in the state at 16 percent.

Between Leadville and Minturn, the Gilman mine—which was once one of the largest producers of zinc in Colorado—shut down in 1984, removing another significant source of tax revenue from the college's budget.

The unexpected closure of Exxon's Colony Project had an immediate effect on the college. It put a halt to plans to provide vocational training for oil shale workers. "It fell away in an instant," said Arnie Dollase, Spring Valley dean who also oversaw college operations between Aspen and Parachute. "Our long-term planning had vaporized."

Many who stayed turned to the college for retraining. Rifle Center Director Gary Dutmers and his staff responded with relevant offerings which increased enrollment by 220 percent under his leadership from 1980-85. By the time Dutmers left, there were 300 enrolled in degree programs, in contrast to previous years when most students were not pursuing degrees or were taking non-credit courses. But Rifle's enrollment growth was not enough to cushion the financial blow of the Exxon shutdown and other economic forces.

CMC soon suffered the financial fallout of the loss of revenue from the two largest tax sources in the district: oil shale and molybdenum. At the same time collegewide enrollment began a steep decline that was to last for the better part of six years.

CMC rode the rise of the energy boom anticipating a big future—as many individuals and business did during that time. "We had extended ourselves a lot because we



The booming oil shale development in Garfield County significantly increased the tax base for a time. Photo: David Hiser, US National Archives and Records Administration



The Climax Molybdenum Mine near Leadville provided significant tax revenues to the college until it reduced operations. Photo courtesy of Lake County Public Library, Colorado Mountain History Collection



### PAUL CHESLEY: 100 YEARS OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

The work of CMC professional photography alumnus Paul Chesley was chosen to be included in the prestigious "100 Years of National Geographic" exhibition. Chesley began shooting assignments for National Geographic in 1975 and completed more than 35 projects for the society.



Vice President of Administrative Services Dr. Gordon Snowbarger, giving an award to faculty member Betsy Schenck. He was later promoted to interim president, then hired as CMC's fourth president.

believed that we would be seeing about a million dollars a year in increased income because of Exxon being here," said Steve Rice, who from 1979 to 2006 held a variety of positions, both teaching and administrative. The expensive Cascade Village location in Vail, he recalled, was the primary cause of this financial distress. The college had counted on Exxon-based tax revenue to fund it and "overnight we became 'Colorado Mountain Financially Troubled College' in the *Denver Post*. Faculty and staff were laid off, and contracts for others were reduced."

#### HARD TIMES

The year 1984 was a watershed for the college. In a no-holds-barred memo to Gordon Snowbarger, vice president of administrative services, Jim Buysse, vice president for support services and planning, laid the financial facts on the line. He said that when he came to the college in 1980, he had warned that CMC was looking at a \$1-6 million budget deficit. But the dire prediction didn't sink in. "After all, we were flying high that year, and the future seemed bright," Buysse said. But

**"After all, we were flying high that year, and the future seemed bright."**

**– Jim Buysse**

by early 1984, "the budget came apart," he said.

In the third year of sharp enrollment decline, the board of trustees decided to take a different direction. They installed Snowbarger as interim president.

The same day, June 18, a group of Garfield County citizens presented a petition, signed by 300 people, to dissolve the college district and have

CMC join the state community college system. Their stated goal was to relieve themselves of a growing tax burden in a struggling economy. Under state statute, CMC had 90 days to prepare a dissolution plan and present it to the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education. If the state board approved the plan, the question of whether or not to join the state system would be up to the voters of the district.

The deep recession, the downward spiral of enrollment, a severe cut in state funding for full-time-equivalent students, and tax revenues that were also on a steep decline, caused a financial crisis. The college responded by cutting 26 positions and imposing a salary freeze.

Going into 1985, Buysse warned, "we have witnessed a significant erosion of our financial base. The situation seems to be getting worse instead of better."

The financial crisis was nowhere felt so strongly as in the board of trustees, which was trying to keep the ship afloat. A couple of years earlier, Chairman David Dunn had laid out a drastic plan that he thought would save the college. In a memo to his fellow board members, Dunn had written, "I believe our survival depends upon our radical redirection of CMC's operations."

He pointed out that most of the students on the three campuses came from outside the district and the state. A large part of the general and capital reserve funds financed the residential academic programs. Most of the "day-time programs," Dunn wrote, "are unavailable to most of the in-district people," working adults who were CMC's clientele. CMC was not meeting the needs of the people who paid taxes to keep the college running, he said. His proposal was to curtail full-time student programs and focus on afternoon and evening programs, that is, continuing education.

Further, he recommended closing down all housing and food service on the residential campuses. He even suggested a new name for CMC, Colorado Mountain Community College. Despite Dunn's critique, the college continued to serve not only local residents, but students from outside the CMC District.

On October 29, 1984 the board of trustees declared a fiscal emergency and removed "interim" from Gordon Snowbarger's title, installing him as CMC's fourth president.

A 1984 self-study report to CMC's accrediting agency, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, summed up both the strengths and challenges facing CMC. On the plus side, the school enjoyed a close relationship with the communities within the college district. And, it added a significant amount, in terms of employment and spending, to the economies of those communities.

CMC remained the most affordable two-year college in the state, the report said, with tuition below other two-year schools and significantly lower than the baccalaureate institutions.



Despite a vibrant campus scene in Leadville, Trustee David Dunn proposed cutting back on campus services and student life options to concentrate the college's limited resources on instruction for local residents.

Through the hard times, the college continued to deliver quality educational programs and remained able to tailor programs to the needs of local residents, businesses, and industries. It also boasted a technological milestone by installing computers in administration offices to handle accounting, reporting and registration. Computer labs were appearing on campuses and in educational centers.

Nevertheless, the challenges were many and didn't show any sign of slackening. CMC continued to face financial instability. Although the faculty remained loyal and committed, they had not seen a salary increase in three years. Buildings, especially the residential halls, were in need of remodeling. The report also noted that recruitment efforts and expense to gain full-time students for the residential campuses could be better spent. CMC was serving less than 10 percent of the high school graduates in the district, and they and their parents remained uninformed about the quality programs offered by CMC. Better and more focused marketing was needed.

After thorough study of the dissolution plan, and



Computers arrived at administrative offices with the goal of making work more efficient for employees such as Accounts Clerk Claudia Bergamini. Photo: Walter Gallacher

strong opposition from local residents who supported the college, on February 4, 1985 the state board rejected the move to force CMC into the state system. The following year, CMC won seven-year accreditation, despite the reduction in staff, dropping enrollment, and fiscal difficulties.

CMC also hired consultant Jeff Pryor to determine if a foundation could be established that would act as

**"Those were dire days for Colorado Mountain College... and we survived." – Steve Rice**



#### THE POWDER GUILD

The ski area operations program was an early and essential part of CMC in Leadville. Besides providing careers for its graduates, the program also fostered some lifelong friendships.

They called themselves the Powder Guild. Their passion for skiing brought them together in the first place, and kept their connection alive throughout their careers in the ski industry.

"Back in the day, our motto was 'We're young, good looking and do what we want,'" said Powder Guild member John "Staatz" Staats, in a story on the CMC 50th Anniversary website. Staats now lives in Tucson, Arizona. "Now it's old, out of shape and do what our wives tell us... just kidding, we'll never grow up."

Thirty years after graduation, the group still continues its annual quest for powder. Over that time they've managed to get together for trips to Jackson Hole, Hawaii, Colorado, and Japan.

Although some of the original members have passed away, their spirits are celebrated at every gathering of the Guild.

What continues to unite them, after all these years, is their fun-loving, carefree attitude and CMC. The passion for powder that ignited them back then still burns brightly today.





**PETER JESCHOFNIG**  
*Fulbright Scholar*

In 1988, in a laboratory near Leadville's historic silver mines, Associate Professor Peter Jeschofnig set up a cutting-edge science experiment. His aim was to monitor the effects of high-altitude radiation on the cold fusion process. An alternative to nuclear fission, fusion is the process that powers the sun. It was considered at the time to be the energy of the future because fusion's energy source was deuterium, which is abundant in seawater. Unlike fission, it produces virtually no hazardous by-products.

Leadville was a great place for the experiment, standing as it does at 10,152 feet above sea level.

"This is, right now, one of the hottest things going in science," said Jeschofnig in a story in the summer 1989 CMC newsletter. "Any student who is involved in something which is at the forefront of science cannot help but get charged about taking science classes."

Getting students excited about science was his driving force. His varied background could have set him on many an exciting career path, but he chose to teach chemistry and archeology to students, first at CMC in Leadville and then in Glenwood Springs.

As a graduate student at Southern Methodist University, he did archeology field work in North Africa and Iran. He traveled the world as an exploratory geologist for an oil company. While teaching at CMC, he was a Fulbright scholar twice, in Ethiopia and Namibia.

During his time at CMC in Glenwood Springs, distance learning brought classes all over the college district via television broadcasting. Jeschofnig, who taught chemistry on the interactive video system, developed a pocket laboratory that students could use at home and follow along in the experiments as he demonstrated.

He and his wife Linda developed the laboratory kits that became widely used for distance learning at schools all over the country.

a fundraising arm of the college. His report was positive, and the Colorado Mountain College Foundation was organized in the fall of that year.

"Those were dire days for Colorado Mountain College," Steve Rice remembered. "The college survived by being innovative and very enrollment driven. We certainly did not have the tax base anymore to be able to support what we were doing. And we survived."

### SPRING VALLEY UNDER FIRE, AGAIN

In February, 1985, the board of trustees was faced with yet another effort to move the Spring Valley campus to downtown Glenwood Springs. Two Glenwood real estate agents, Ross Jeffery and Mike Deer, who also served on city council, brought a proposal to the trustees. They

had been working with a local developer, John Ray, who was looking for land for a recreational vehicle resort. The idea, they explained, was to sell individual lots to Sun Belt retirees who wanted to spend the summer in the mountains. Deer and Jeffery suggested Spring Valley.

The deal called for the college to sell the 588 acres of its Spring Valley Campus to the developer for \$7.9 million, and move—lock, stock and barrel—to a shopping center downtown, Schmeuser Plaza.

At a board of trustees meeting in early February, former CMC biology teacher Michelle Balcomb spoke for many faculty and students. The sale, she said, "would be a flat betrayal of the spirit in which that land was donated."

Jack Snobble, former outdoor activities program director, had even stronger words. "I'll be damned if I

*Spring Valley Campus Jazz Band brightened up a spring day in 1985. Photo: Doug Stewart*



*The outdoor classroom was a prime learning environment for many subjects. Doug Rhinehart (front at right), who taught photography at Aspen Campus, led an overnight photo field trip up the Hunter Creek valley. Photo: Betty Moore*



*CU President Gordon Gee (right) and staff rode the train to Glenwood Springs to meet interim CMC President Armen Sarafian and sign the first transfer agreement between the university and a two-year college. Photo: Walter Gallacher*

want to learn outdoor education in Schmeuser Plaza." He said he'd donate the land around his Crystal River Valley home to be used for outdoor programs if the campus moved to downtown Glenwood.

CMC Vice President, Judy Walden, told the trustees that Spring Valley needed to double its enrollment in order to remain viable as a residential campus. Trustee Doris Bailey, in an effort to tamp down the dissent, said the proposal was "an interesting scheme" that the board intended to study before making a decision.

However, at the next board meeting, on February 25, they decided not to pursue the Spring Valley developers' offer.

### TURNING THE CORNER

After the 1980s passed their midpoint, CMC took a turn for the better. Dr. Armen Sarafian succeeded Gordon Snowbarger, becoming interim president in 1985. Sarafian was a former president of two California institutions, Pasadena City College and the University of LaVerne. His short tenure from mid-1985 to mid-1987 was a time of recovery from the tumultuous years of the early 1980s. Sarafian focused on recruiting and public relations. He additionally championed the use of developing technology to deliver "distance learning" to campuses and community education throughout the district via public television courses and computers.

Sarafian also signed an agreement with the University of Colorado Boulder, the first comprehensive transfer agreement between a two-year college and the university. CMC courses were recognized as CU equals. CMC students who successfully completed a two-year degree would be guaranteed transfer of their credits to the university and enter as juniors, needing only two more years to earn their bachelor's degrees.

"The University of Colorado never had a transfer agreement until ours," said CMC Pre-Enrollment Director Barb Edwards, who instigated the process after discussing its merits with CU Admissions Director Pete Storey. She then set about convincing Charles Middleton, dean of the college of arts and sciences, that CMC students were well prepared to be successful at CU. The University of Colorado institutional research office verified that, indeed, the CMC students that had transferred to CU Boulder performed better



### SOLAR LLAMAS

Students and faculty from the solar retrofit program packed photovoltaic panels by llama to the Friends backcountry hut near Pearl Pass, south of Aspen. The crew then assembled a system to bring electrical power to the hut, one of the first to be so equipped. The story made the *Rocky Mountain News* and the covers of local newspapers. Photo: Doug Stewart



**"The University of Colorado never had a transfer agreement until ours."  
— Barb Edwards**



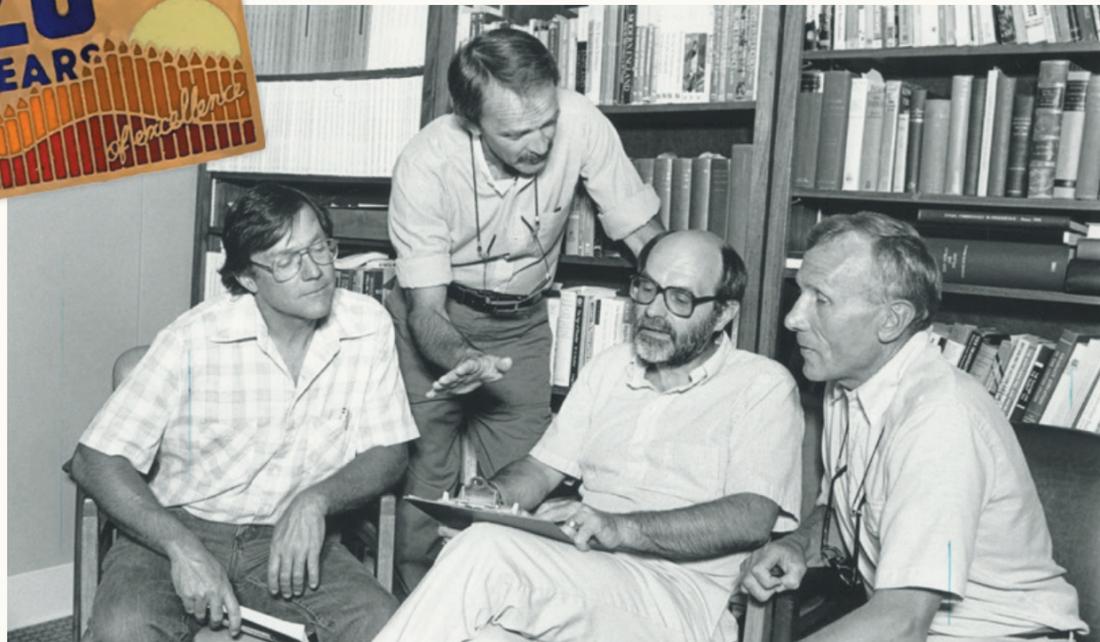
**LUKE SKYWALKER**  
A bald eagle that broke his wing in a powerline collision was brought to the Spring Valley veterinary technology farm in 1988. Though his wing had to be amputated, the eagle was cared for by veterinary technology students and housed in a solar-heated shelter designed and built by solar retrofit faculty. Dubbed Luke Skywalker, the eagle was joined in 1991 by Cheyenne, an injured golden eagle. Luke Skywalker delighted visitors until he died in 2009. *Photo: Doug Stewart*



CMC President Dennis Mayer serves midnight breakfast during finals week at Spring Valley Campus. *Photo: Walter Gallacher*

academically than students who had begun there. “It was pivotal for us,” said Edwards. “It showed we had grown up. It demonstrated the caliber of our students who could stand on their own at a place like the University of Colorado.”

After a long search for a permanent leader, the board of trustees hired Dr. Dennis Mayer, a former president of Mount San Jacinto College in southern California and Mount San Antonio College in Walnut, California. Immediately upon stepping into his role as CMC’s fifth president, Mayer defined his mission to improve CMC’s image and reputation, and to maintain its relationship with the community.



CMC faculty members Dr. Bob Baker (far left) and George Tolles (far right) met in Boulder with University of Colorado dean of the college of arts and sciences Charles Middleton, (center right), and a CU faculty member to work out details for a groundbreaking transfer agreement with the university.

As CMC marked its 20th anniversary, it had weathered many storms and was coming up stronger than ever. It was a worthy match for the rugged mountains that it called home. The year 1987 was a very good one. For the first time in over six years, enrollment numbers were on the rise. Increases were seen at almost every campus, with Aspen and Glenwood Springs leading at 31 percent growth. How was CMC attracting more students? Edwards’ recruiting efforts combined with concerted public relations and marketing, featuring well-designed publications and ads for prospective students.

Under Director of Marketing Walter Gallacher, the 1986-87 catalog, designed by Vickie Stevinson, was given the Paragon Award for best two-year college catalog in the country by the National Council of College Relations. It was the first of more than 100 national awards that would be won in the years to come by the CMC marketing department, many in partnership with Stevinson Design.



**Rolling Stone magazine named CMC as one of “The Cool Schools.”**

The college was also receiving a good share of favorable mention in national magazines and regional newspapers, including *Ski*, *Rocky Mountain News* and *Mother Earth News*. *Rolling Stone* magazine named CMC as one of “The Cool Schools,” along with Cornell, Syracuse, Dartmouth, Penn, and MIT. Elite company indeed.



**MAEGAN CARNEY**

*Ski Team Champion*

While at Alpine Campus in Steamboat Springs, Maegan Carney proved that excellence in academics and sports complement each other. Carney was the National Collegiate Ski Association slalom and overall ski champion in 1988 and 1989. She was also named the national student athlete of the year both years, with a 4.0 GPA.

CMC, she said, was the foundation of her success. “A lot of people see CMC as a stepping stone to greater projects, which is wonderful, but I also want to remind people that it is an incredible experience in and of itself. When I was a student, CMC was full of brilliant professors who truly cultivated our minds, but more importantly, I knew that they really cared about us. My teachers nurtured me as a whole person and my time at CMC was clearly the best years of my formal education.”

After graduating from CMC, Carney transferred to the University of Colorado and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy, with honors. She went on to earn a master’s in counseling psychology from Naropa University. Skiing continued to be a passion. In 2001 and 2002, she became the world extreme skiing champion. Carney passed on her love of skiing and educational philosophy of caring for students as an instructor and course director at Colorado Outward Bound School.

She later established a practice as a Transpersonal Psychotherapist in Canmore, BC, Canada. In 2011, the CMC ski team joined the NCAA Division I Rocky Mountain Intercollegiate Ski Association, giving a new generation of CMC racers the opportunity to compete at the highest collegiate level.



*Photos: Doug Stewart*



# Colorado Mountain College District & Service Area



Photo: Altitude Filmworks



Photo: Ed Kosmicki

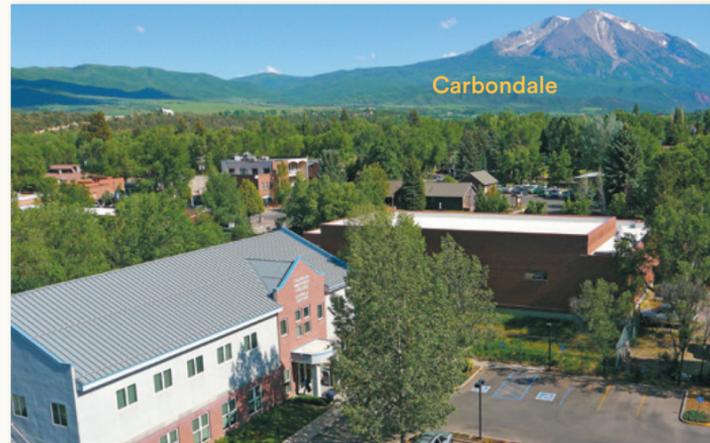


Photo: Altitude Filmworks



Photo: Altitude Filmworks



Photo: Altitude Filmworks

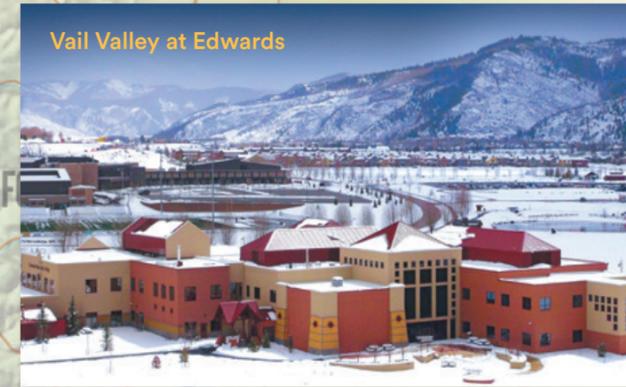


Photo: Altitude Filmworks



Photo: Benjamin Hunter, Isaacson School



Photo: Benjamin Hunter, Isaacson School

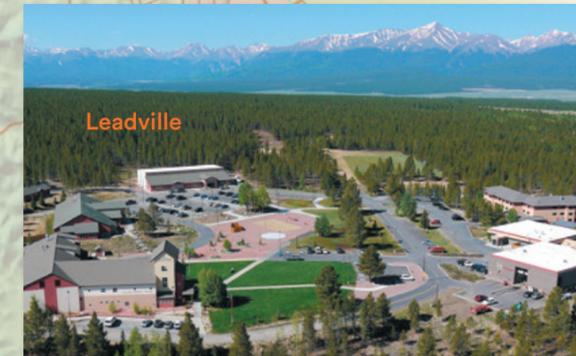


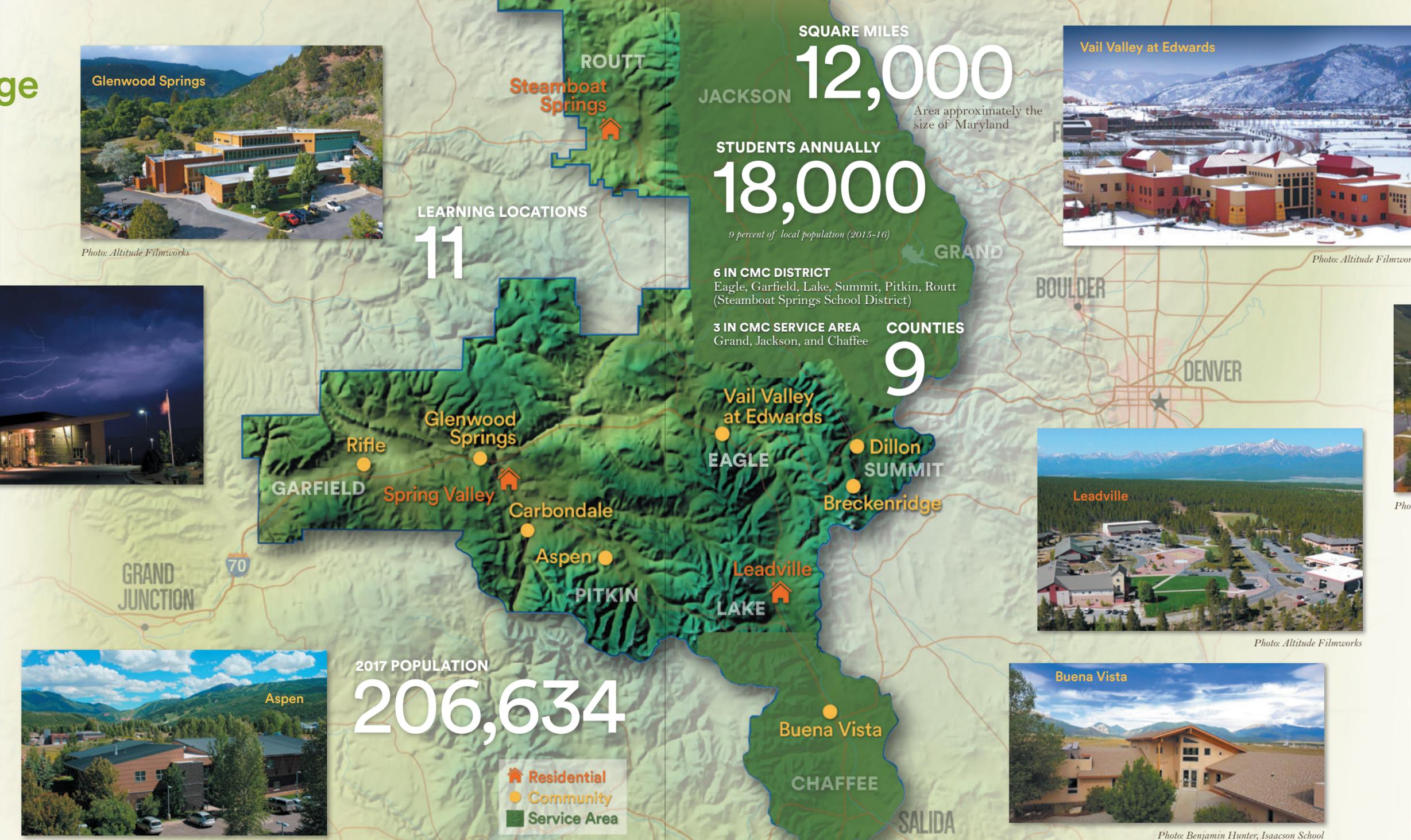
Photo: Altitude Filmworks



Photo: Benjamin Hunter, Isaacson School



Photo: Ed Kosmicki



# Inspired by Mountains

Penny hot springs near Redstone. Photo: Janelle Tognio



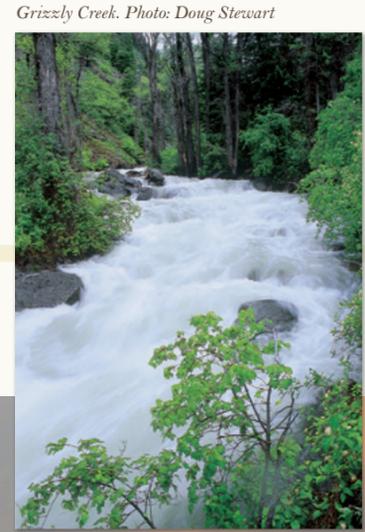
Avalanche Creek, Snowmass-Maroon Bells Wilderness. Photo: Doug Stewart



Town of Breckenridge. Photo: © Bob Winsett Photography 2014



Buena Vista Whitewater Park. Photo: Arkansas Valley Digital Imaging



Grizzly Creek. Photo: Doug Stewart

NATIONAL FORESTS  
**9,925**  
SQUARE MILES

MAJOR CREEKS  
**21**

NORDIC SKI AREAS  
**19**

GOLD MEDAL STREAMS AND LAKES  
**6**

SKI RESORTS  
**17**

STREAMS & CREEKS  
**400+**

NATURAL HOT SPRINGS  
**14**



MOUNTAIN PEAKS  
**24**  
OVER 14,000 FEET

Capitol Peak. Photo: Doug Stewart



West Cross Creek, Holy Cross Wilderness. Photo: Doug Stewart



WILDERNESS AREAS  
**15**

Clinton Gulch Reservoir. Photo: Tyler Stableford



# Elevating CMC Communities



The David Allen Challenge Course at Spring Valley is available to groups and businesses for team-building retreats. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

CMC's campuses are vibrant learning spaces which are also available to local residents for meetings, entertainment, and recreation. From yoga studios to soccer fields, pre-schools to auditoriums, many CMC facilities are open as community resources. In addition to being educational centers, campuses have served as polling places, hosted town halls and

musical performances, and provided weekly spaces for senior lunch programs. Non-profit organizations are supported with affordable meeting space. Because of partnerships with local communities, CMC has been able to sustainably grow facilities which meet the needs of students and others.

## Campus Footprint

**TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE OF BUILDINGS | 757,898**

**RESIDENCE HALLS | 3**  
Steamboat Springs, Leadville, Spring Valley, with a total bed capacity of 610.

**AUDITORIUMS | 4**  
Rifle, Vail Valley at Edwards, Breckenridge, Steamboat Springs

**LIBRARIES | 4**  
Steamboat Springs, Leadville, Glenwood Springs, Virtual Library

**TOTAL CAMPUS ACREAGE**

**1,280**

**BUILDINGS**  
**32**

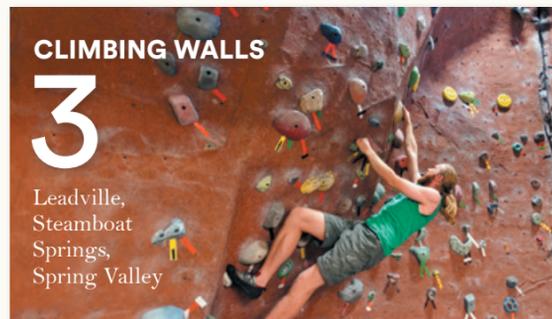
## Recreational Facilities

**GYMS | 3**  
Steamboat Springs, Leadville, Spring Valley

**GATES SOCCER PARK**  
Five collegiate-size fields at Spring Valley

**DISC GOLF COURSES | 3**  
Steamboat Springs, Leadville, Spring Valley

**TRAIL NETWORK**  
15 miles linked with Mineral Belt Trail at Leadville



Leadville climbing wall. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**  
**\$300**

**MILLION ANNUALLY**  
CMC District and Service Area (2013 study)



**COMPUTER LABS**  
**47**

Assistant Dean of Instruction Adrian Fielder at the CMC Carbondale charging station. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

## IT Network

**DATA CAPABILITIES**  
Wired: 75 switches and 20 routers.

Wireless: 350 access points.

Aggregate bandwidth: 10 Gbps to the internet and 30 Gbps of total connectivity between sites.

**SMART CLASSROOMS**  
**150**

15 miles of public trails at Leadville for biking, running and hiking. Photo: Daniel Deschane



**1 CONCERT-QUALITY BOSENDORFER GRAND PIANO**

Breckenridge

## Sustainability

**GEO-EXCHANGE HEATING AND COOLING | 2**  
Sopris residence hall and Quigley Library at Spring Valley

**GROUND SOURCE HEATING**  
Academic Center with 56 wells tied to boiler system at Steamboat Springs

**BUILDINGS BUILT TO LEED SILVER STANDARDS | 3**  
Vail Valley at Edwards, Steamboat Springs, Aspen

**ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS | 15**

**3 PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS**

300,000 KWH provides 3.7% of annual CMC use. Aspen, Leadville and Rifle

Leadville solar farm. Photo: Benjamin Hunter, Isaacson School

## Specialized Learning Facilities

**FIRE SCIENCE LABS | 2**  
Vail Valley at Edwards, Dotsero

**WELDING LAB**  
Leadville

**SNOWCAT DRIVER'S ED COURSE**  
Leadville

**NATURAL GAS PROCESSING LAB**  
Rifle

**SNOWSPORTS EQUIPMENT DESIGN LAB**  
Steamboat Springs

**NURSING LABS | 2**  
Breckenridge, Spring Valley

**WATER, SOIL, ROCK AND BUILDING MATERIAL ANALYSIS LAB**  
Leadville

**VETERINARY TECHNOLOGY FARM**  
220 acres at Spring Valley

**2 NURSING LABS**  
Breckenridge, Spring Valley



**2 BEE COLONIES**  
Carbondale, Steamboat Springs

Steamboat Springs beehives. Photo: Doug Stewart



Nursing lab in Breckenridge. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

## Arts

**DANCE/FITNESS STUDIOS | 5**  
Aspen, Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Steamboat Springs (2)

**ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET SCHOOL**  
Aspen

**NEW SPACE THEATRE**  
Home of Sopris Theatre Co., Spring Valley



Aspen, Rifle, Vail Valley at Edwards



New Space Theatre at Spring Valley. Photo: Scot Gerdes

**STRANAHAN COLLECTION OF MASTERS' PHOTOGRAPHS**  
Collegewide

**TEACHING KITCHENS | 2**  
Breckenridge, Steamboat Springs

**DIGITAL MEDIA/ PHOTOGRAPHY/ VIRTUAL REALITY LAB**  
Spring Valley

## Other Community Assets

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER**  
Steamboat Springs

**PUBLIC PRE-SCHOOLS | 2**  
Glenwood Springs, Rifle

**AVALANCHE FORECASTING WEATHER STATION**  
Leadville

**HISTORIC HAYDEN RANCH**  
Leadville

**GARFIELD SEWING WORKS**  
Rifle

**COMMUNITY COLLABORATION SPACE**  
Morgridge Commons at Glenwood Springs

**WELCOME CENTER**  
Co-operated with the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association

**RADIO STATION - RADIO CMC**  
Spring Valley, Glenwood Springs

**CHALLENGE COURSE**  
Spring Valley



Radio CMC studio at CMC Glenwood Springs. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

“So many universities achieve excellence by screening people out. We achieve excellence by screening people in.”

– President Cynthia Heelan



# Coming Apart, Coming Together



As it entered its third decade, Colorado Mountain College rightfully considered itself a mature institution. It had strong leadership in place; it had become more financially secure; and it had a clear vision for the future.

### SOUL SEARCHING

CMC also had a plan to recover from the tumultuous 1980s. Upon his appointment in 1987, President Dennis Mayer laid out the goals for his tenure. He reiterated a theme that had started with Dean Lillie in the 1970s: the need for a unified college.

The sprawling college district with its diverse communities had an entrepreneurial spirit that both drove programs forward and created a headache for the central administration. The need for unity was never more acute than at this time. Mayer recognized both the need for an overarching administration run out of the district office in Glenwood Springs, and an

equally strong need to let the various campuses have their freedom.

In the early 1990s, the state was still in recovery from the deep recession of the previous decade. At CMC, enrollment had leveled off and state funding for full-time equivalent students was flat. Many of the buildings on all the campuses were in need of repair or replacement. A wide-ranging facilities master plan considered each building, and identified its deficiencies, to the tune of about \$48 million.

New state legislation, passed in 1992, reflected a strong movement nationwide that sought to limit the growth of government. The Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) was a Colorado law that required tax increases be tied to inflation and population increases. Larger tax increases had to be approved by the voters.

In an anti-tax climate and hampered by TABOR, CMC would be hard pressed to come up with the financing for facility fixes.

CMC hired a consultant, Dr. George Keller, to hold a collegewide strategic planning conference that would help chart a course for the college going forward. Right off the bat, Keller found fault with CMC as it stood. He criticized the number of campuses. That launched heated discussion about the future of the college. The central question was, just how many campuses should CMC have? With no consensus reached in the strategic planning sessions, a new committee was formed to come up with an answer.

The Committee for CMC's Future, dubbed C2F2, was charged to find a balance between the freedom each site enjoyed to govern itself, and the need for consistency across the college. The committee looked at a number of scenarios. Some spoke for having one residential campus and five nonresidential "delivery units." Some called for two residential campuses and three regional learning centers. That would mean one residential campus out of the existing three would become what the committee called a "commuter" campus.

With tax revenues, state funding, and enrollment flat, the committee felt the opportunity for significant growth was limited. Without the resources to fund all of the projects outlined by the master plan, the committee whittled the list down to a few it thought were necessary. Among those were renovation of the residence hall on the Alpine Campus in Steamboat Springs, as well as new buildings at Spring Valley Campus near Glenwood Springs and Timberline Campus in Leadville. Also on the list was a new building in Eagle County to replace the Cascade Village site. And in Aspen, the lease on the building it shared with the school district was due to terminate in a few years.

The strategic planning exercise also released tensions between the various campuses over how budget money was spent: essentially, who got how much, and why the distribution was not equal. Another divisive issue that kept cropping up, both internally and in the communities within the district, was the amount of taxes each county contributed compared to the amount of budget spent in those counties.



Longtime English and Literature Professor Gary Cummings with a student at Timberline Campus in Leadville. Photo: Doug Stewart



Timberline Campus staff and faculty in Leadville, circa 1983, in front of Mount Massive.

Finally, the C2F2 committee presented its recommendations to the board of trustees: keep two residential campuses, Alpine and Spring Valley, and turn Timberline into a commuter campus. This last recommendation did not sit well with Leadville. Residents showed up in droves at a board of trustees meeting to protest. The Leadville chamber weighed in, claiming that Leadville paid the largest portion

**“We need the college here as it is one of the major employers of the area. Also, the students contribute to the economy.”**  
**– Lake County Commissioner Carl Miller**

of property tax in the district. With the closure of Climax, it was more important than ever to keep CMC in Leadville. “We need the college here as it is one of the major employers of the area. Also, the students contribute to the economy,” said Lake County Commissioner Carl Miller.

Due at least in part to the outcry from Leadville, the trustees appealed to Mayer's President's Advisory Council to craft a compromise plan. The council urged the trustees to keep the existing seven campuses. It was a plan the board of trustees could live with.



### AMERICA'S BEST COLLEGES

U.S. News & World Report included Colorado Mountain College in the 1990 "Guide to America's Best Colleges." The article included only 15 other two-year colleges.

### DISSOLUTION, AGAIN

Amid all the internal soul searching that was going on, CMC took another hit from the Tri-County Taxpayers Association. In 1989, CMC had increased the mill levy 14 percent. Although it was for construction of new buildings, not day-to-day operations, the county group was up in arms.

Charles Stoddard, a Glenwood Springs attorney and member of the anti-tax group, led the petition drive to once again force CMC to prepare a plan to dissolve the district and join the state community college system. CMC is "no bargain," he told a *Community College Week* newspaper reporter. "This college was

started in '65 to provide a place for our kids who couldn't go to a four-year college, and yet it's turned out to be far afield of that. It's turned out to be a little something for everybody without any meaningful direction for education."

What most irked Stoddard were such classes as cabinet-making, assertiveness training, ballet, and aerobics. In his opinion, these were classes that shouldn't be funded with taxpayer dollars. Further, the campuses had grown "helter-skelter," looking like "Taj Mahals," the story said.

To illuminate the value of CMC to the region, the marketing department created a series of newspaper ads that answered the question, "Why do we need a college?" The "Because" campaign featured photos of local business members, government officials, graduates, and others who together made a compelling case that the college was integral to thriving mountain communities.

Unlike the 1984 petition from the taxpayers, CMC considered this newest petition to be invalid. The Tri-County Taxpayers Association immediately countered by taking the matter to District Court, where the judge backed the college. Undeterred, the group moved on to the Court of Appeals, which took a different tack and ordered CMC to prepare a dissolution plan. The mandated plan, however, was once again rejected by the state board.

### THE EYES OF A DREAMER

In June 1993, Dennis Mayer retired from CMC. Taking his place was Cynthia Heelan. The college's first female president came with definite views about where it should be headed. She had nearly become a Catholic nun, having taken temporary vows twice, but upon meeting with the spiritual adviser before taking her final vows, was told to "get in your car and go over the hill, because this is not the place for

you." A former VISTA volunteer who had worked with migrants, Heelan was a first-generation college graduate who left the cloistered life to find a career in community colleges. She had risen to a position as vice president of the Arrowhead Community College Region in Minnesota, which had seven campuses spread over 23,000 square miles. She had an understanding of the breadth of the CMC District. But more than that, she understood the diversity of its people.

"This district is like a microcosm of the country," she said in a feature story in the *Rocky Mountain News* Sunday magazine of January 16, 1994. "We have the most affluent residents, and we have some of the poorest people in the country. This



The "Because" campaign featured locals who had benefitted from CMC, such as Aspen legends Dick and Miggs Durrance and Glenwood Springs Fire Chief Jim Mason.

college, in the past, has primarily served those who have. Well, we need to reach out more. We need to serve the have-nots.”

The best way to serve them, a way she was strongly committed to, was through a community college like CMC.

“The mission of a community college is very important to me,” she said. “Many of the people who come to a community college can’t go anywhere else. We have the ability to bring them in, to work with them on a personal level, in small classes. We have the ability to help these people leave here at a new level. And that is the most exciting thing about this place.”

Heelan was not shy about taking a strong lead. “I’ve been behind

the engine throughout my career—four cars back from the front, three cars, two cars. I didn’t want to be behind the engine anymore. I wanted to be the engine.”

After several months on the job, she noticed that the college had only about 10 percent minority students. There were no minorities among the staff and faculty. She wanted to change that, hiring a director of multicultural relations and studies to create new programs to serve the Latino community.

She also acknowledged that one of her most pressing and challenging tasks was pulling the often disparate and squabbling campuses together. All three residential campuses were clamoring for new residence halls. Heelan brokered a compromise: rather than having to choose which one would get the first residence hall, construction would begin on all three sites simultaneously. They were funded by investment grade, AAA-rated bonds that sold out on the first day they were issued, a testament to the financial stability of the institution.

**“We have the ability to help these people leave here at a new level. And that is the most exciting thing about this place.”**

— Cynthia Heelan

By the mid-1990s, Colorado Mountain College was seeing unprecedented growth. One out of eight people in the college district was taking classes, according to a story in *The Aspen Times*. Classes were taught by over 600 adjunct or part-time instructors. In all, during the 1993-94 academic year, 21,000 students—including 2,000 Latinos—were enrolled. Most of the students who flocked to CMC during that time were working adults.

Students were welcomed with open arms at CMC, and that was the secret to its success. “Community colleges are about access,” said President Heelan. “So many universities achieve excellence by



### CMC ON JEOPARDY

Answer: “This institution of higher education is located at a higher elevation than any other college in the United States.” The question: “What is Colorado Mountain College?” —*Jeopardy!* TV quiz show, December 12, 1991



Residence halls were built simultaneously at (from top) Steamboat Springs, Leadville and Spring Valley. Photos: Doug Stewart



### LEADVILLE’S LLAMA

During the spring semester of 1994, a llama decided to make Timberline Campus her home. The campus notified her owners, who took her back home, only to have her escape and make the 1.75-mile trek back to the school. Dubbed “Sugar” by campus residents, she would often interrupt meetings when she appeared in a window. Students, faculty, and staff had fun feeding her treats and making a shelter out of hay bales. She liked getting showered by the sprinkler system. She stayed on campus through the fall of 1995, then one day left and didn’t return, apparently because another llama had arrived back home. She lived until 2017, when she was 24 years old. Photo: Bill Scherer

screening people out. We achieve excellence by screening people in.”

In 1995, community colleges in Colorado were seeing an “explosion of growth,” said *The Denver Post*, because they were more affordable. At that time, the total cost of instruction for a student enrolled at a Colorado university was \$8,400, the paper reported. The cost for a student at one of the state’s community colleges was \$3,973.

More and more students were coming to the college in order to earn a degree, whether it was a two-year associate degree or to take classes preparing them for transfer to a four-year college. What propelled that trend, in part, was an agreement reached in the late 1980s by all the two- and four-year colleges in the state that standardized lower level courses so they could be transferred to four-year schools.

CMC had evolved. “It’s a far cry from the early days of the tie-dyed instructors, but the same small town feeling,” said a story in *The Summit Daily News*.

Agile as ever, CMC continued to respond to the ever-changing needs of the district’s communities. In Summit County, CMC established the culinary arts apprenticeship program in partnership with Keystone Resort and the American Culinary Federation. The three-year course combined classroom work with hands-on experience in the kitchens of

**The internet was becoming available for public use. With it came an explosion of possibilities... But CMC wasn’t yet wired for it.**

highly regarded chefs. Graduates were awarded an Associate of Applied Science degree, as well as certifications from the American Culinary Federation.

### LOGGING ON

In the early 90s, the internet was becoming available for public use. With it came an explosion of possibilities such as virtual classrooms and the worldwide web. But CMC wasn’t yet wired for it. Only the computer services department had a connection. That didn’t stop an enterprising computer faculty member from trying to get her students connected to the rest of the world. Jim English, then director of computer services, remembered that in the faculty member’s off-hours, she figured out how to run a cable from the third floor of the Glenwood Center, where the computer services department was then



An agreement with Keystone Resort offered a European-style apprenticeship, giving students the opportunity to work in resort kitchens while earning their culinary degree. Photo: Ed Kosmicki



Photo: Doug Stewart

### DOUG SCHWARTZ

*CMC Culinary Institute founder*

At Keystone Resort, Doug Schwartz stumbled by chance into cooking when he was a ski bum hanging around restaurant kitchens, hoping to nab some food. After honing his chef skills on the job at Keystone, he worked at restaurants in West Virginia, Hawaii, and France. Despite his “on the job” route to success, Schwartz believed a culinary training program would benefit student chefs and the hospitality industry.

After returning to Keystone in the late 1980s, he pressed CMC to launch an apprentice-style program. “We were trying to run a world-class resort with ski bums as cooks,” he told the *Summit Daily News* in 2016. Schwartz envisioned a program to train beginning chefs in kitchen and business skills.

In 1993, CMC asked Schwartz to design and direct the CMC Culinary Institute at Keystone. From 1993 to 2000, it grew from 15 to 40 student chefs, and earned recognition for Schwartz as CMC’s collegewide instructor of the year.

The culinary institute was and continued to be a rigorous program. Students worked 6,000 hours with seasoned chefs in live kitchens at the resort, learning 300 cooking skills. Classes focus on science and business, including nutrition, purchasing, and cost control.

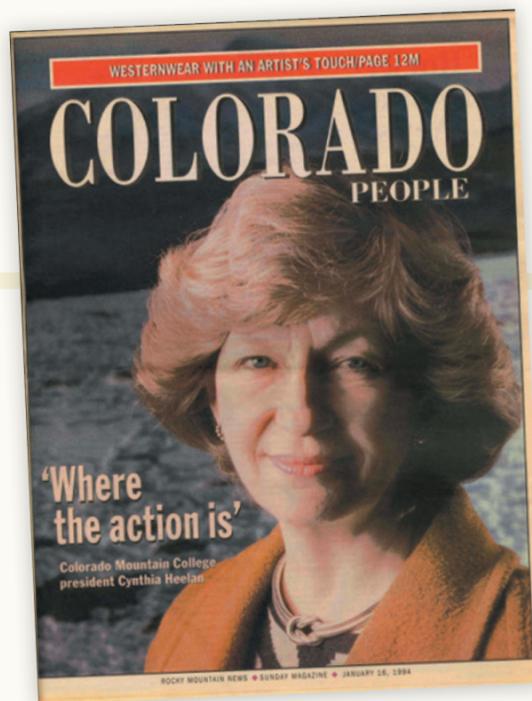
“They go to school full time and work full time for three straight years. They graduate certified as a sous chef as opposed to a cook, so they can start in the industry at a higher level,” Schwartz said.

Culinary institute grads land in prestigious jobs across the country and many win recognition for their work.

“It became a national model for an apprentice-based degree program, through the American Culinary Federation. There might have been two or three schools in the nation integrating an apprentice program with a degree,” Schwartz said.

After a few years away from CMC, Schwartz returned in 2009, opening the noncredit Recreational Culinary Institute for adventurous home cooks. With chef Ian Buchanan, he developed 90 single-evening classes, offered in Breckenridge.

Upon retirement, Schwartz and his wife, Mary, moved to Fort Collins to restore an old farmhouse, keep bees, and, of course, cook.



President Cynthia Heelan was featured in the Rocky Mountain News Sunday magazine



The Center for Excellence in Leadership brought together leaders from the region to learn teamwork and problem-solving skills in outdoor situations, such as this climb up Mt. Elbert.

located, down to her first-floor office, giving her an internet connection to prepare for a CISCO computer networking class. When the staff member in charge of college networks found the hack, he grabbed some wire cutters and severed the cable. It didn't sit well downstairs.

"Everyone was asking for an internet connection," recalled English, "but we weren't ready." As the interactive video system (IVS) came on board to link campuses across the district, bandwidth and connectivity increased. "My network connection budget went from \$25,000 to \$250,000," said English. The tenfold increase in budget purchased a blazing 1.5 megabits per second for all college functions—IVS, phones, data, and internet.

"Probably more than anything, adding phones to the network brought us together as one college," he said. Instead of dialing a long-distance number and access code for the switchboard at another campus, employees could now dial their colleagues directly with four digits.

Pitkin County Trustee Bill Simmons, whose business dealt on the cutting edge of technology, urged staff to create a website, then created a prototype himself to push the project along. After meeting with Jim English to learn what a website was and how it worked, the marketing team

### In 1997, the CMC Foundation launched its most ambitious fundraising campaign to date.

began learning HTML and searching for someone to build the college's first website. They found their webmaster in Jeff Troeger, professor of computer studies at Alpine Campus in Steamboat Springs. Like Simmons, Troeger had been tracking developments on the internet and was ready to build the first version of www.coloradomtn.edu as a summer project, most of it hand-coded.

#### THE CENTERS FOR EXCELLENCE

The 1990s saw the CMC Foundation rising to provide additional resources beyond the traditional revenue streams. This put new options on the table for CMC leaders to consider.

In 1997, the foundation launched its most ambitious campaign to date. The goal was to raise \$4.5 million to create new districtwide programs: the Centers for Excellence in arts, leadership, and business and technology. All without raising taxes or tuition.

In addition to traditional academic programs, CMC had fostered the arts throughout its history through special programs such as Summervail, Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Snowmass, and the summer photography workshop in Breckenridge. The Center of Excellence in Arts would extend that legacy. With an infusion of \$1 million for the arts, the



The New Discovery building in Leadville provided new lab space, classrooms, and offices, replacing the temporary structures from 1967.

college intended to fund a street-front gallery in Glenwood Springs as a springboard for local and national art exhibits that would tour the district. Other arts programming would be created in CMC communities.

The Center for Excellence in Leadership became a collaborative program for the central Rockies where current and future leaders would form lasting relationships and learn innovative problem-solving methods for regional issues such as housing shortages and the changing workforce. To support this initiative, the Catto Family Foundation gave a \$1.5 million endowment to the college in 1998 to fund scholarships that aimed to develop local leaders. It was the largest gift to date to the CMC Foundation. The center, named for the Catto Family, brought together regional leaders to study successful leadership in a variety of settings. They then would test their leadership lessons the outdoors, rappelling down cliffs, running whitewater, or climbing a 14,000-foot peak as a team.

A third program, the Center for Excellence in Business and Technology, focused on putting new advances in technology in the classroom and providing information age training for local businesses. Significant resources would be required for the college to jump into the fast-moving technological stream.

An Aspen couple, Carrie and John Morgridge, were interested in helping advance technology at CMC. John's father was the CEO and chairman of CISCO, a computer



Always at the forefront of technology, Steamboat Springs Professor Jeff Troeger designed the college's first website. Photo: Doug Stewart

networking company headquartered in Silicon Valley. The Morgridge Family Foundation presented a gift of \$1 million, designating 65 percent for "smart" classrooms with interactive whiteboards and computer-based communication software. By the end of 2000, smart classrooms had been installed on the Leadville, Alpine, Spring Valley, and Vail campuses.

#### BUILDING BOOM

The college was in need of several major buildings. Learning spaces had been pieced together in some communities using rented space or local schools. The three residential campuses still used their original buildings, many of which

### The tenfold increase in budget purchased a blazing 1.5 megabits per second for all college functions.

were designed decades earlier to be temporary structures.

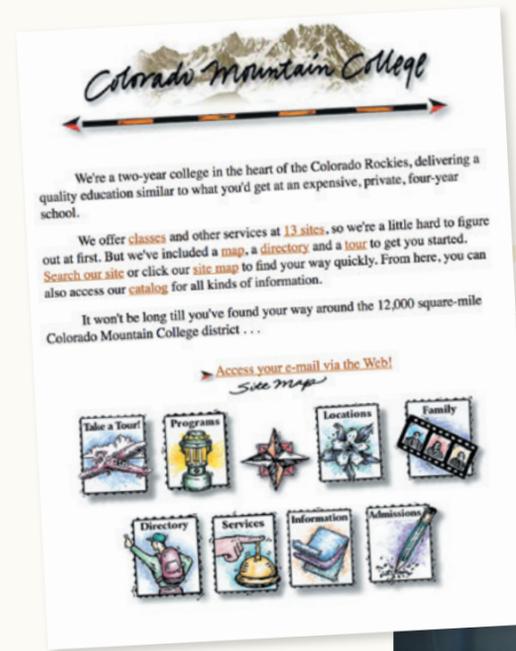
CMC Carbondale constantly had inadequate space to accommodate rapidly growing enrollments, with staff shuffling chalkboards and other equipment between various rented locations on Main Street. A solution to this walked right in the door one day, in January 1995. Longtime Carbondale local Ginny Lappala came to the college's office on Carbondale's Main Street and offered land for a permanent building in town. Debra Burleigh, center director at the time, recalled Ginny telling her, "I have been a teacher, a tutor, and even a student here at CMC. I've talked to my kids already, and I want to donate my lots." Burleigh said she now looks



A new era of college construction began with the Lappala Center in Carbondale. Photo: Ed Kosmicki



Ginny Lappala acknowledged the thankful crowd at the groundbreaking on land she donated for a new center in Carbondale. Applauding her gift were (l-r) Trustee Ed Hill, President Cynthia Heelan, Carbondale and Glenwood Springs CMC Director Jan Shugart, and Trustee Bob Dillon. Photo: Doug Stewart



CMC's first homepage.



The Center for Excellence in Technology set the course for ensuring that the latest computers were available to students, as in this lab at Aspen Campus. Photo: Doug Stewart



Photo: Ed Kosmicki

## CONNIE AND JIM CALAWAY

*The Art of Giving It Away*

Jim Calaway was born into both a poor tenant farming family and a perpetual state of urgency. He finished high school at age 15, went on to become the first in his family to complete college, finished law school at University of Texas, and was an oil and gas tycoon by his early 30s. He lived the big life. But there was a certain emptiness and lack of fulfillment.

Around age 40, he shifted to sharing his wealth. "I came to realize that expanding my philanthropic activities could be both meaningful and fun at the same time," Calaway recalled.

He was drawn to the Roaring Fork Valley by the Aspen Institute. He served as the chair of the institute's Society of Fellows then as a trustee, and later as chairman of the Lifetime Trustees. His résumé includes other national leadership positions, as well.

When Connie and Jim moved to Carbondale, they were invited by CMC President Cynthia Heelan and CMC Foundation CEO Alexandra Yajko to become involved with Colorado Mountain College. Jim said he had "been involved in public and university education for years and years, on three university boards. I'd heard about community college, but I'd never met a community college." Thus began a decades-long relationship between the college and the Calaways.

The Calaways gave the lead gift for a new building at Spring Valley—the James C. and Connie L. Calaway Academic Building. Both served on the Colorado Mountain College Foundation Board, with Connie serving as chair from 1999 to 2002. In 2012, Jim founded and served as chairman on the Colorado Mountain College Board of Overseers, a volunteer board of advisers to the CMC president.

Seeing promising students who needed extra support, the Calaways established the Calaway Scholars program which by 2017 had paid tuition and fees for more than 100 local students. Twice each semester, Jim and Connie sat down to lunch with these scholars in the Spring Valley cafeteria to offer them encouragement and guidance.

When CMC began planning for a new media program, Jim called his friend, Aspen Institute CEO Walter Isaacson, asking him to lend his name to the effort. Jim later predicted that the Isaacson School for New Media would continue to gain financial support and grow in stature to become "the most nationally prestigious thing that our school has ever had."

Isaacson later co-authored a feature story with CMC President Hauser about the Calaways' benevolence that was published in the national magazine *Philanthropy*.

"What I've been in my heart and mind wanting to do," Jim said, "is to help this become one of the most distinguished schools in America."



The Morgridge Family Academic Center in Aspen. Photo: Doug Stewart



John and Carrie Morgridge. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

back on that moment "as having been witness to one of the most generous acts of community giving." President Heelan, who had said she was anxious to "dig some dirt," was jubilant at the groundbreaking, raising her shovel over her head in triumph. The Lappala Center opened in 1996.

Following the Lappala Center, the 27,000-square-foot Discovery Academic Center on Timberline Campus opened in 1999, replacing the shifting floors and leaky roofs of the "temporary" classroom pods that had arrived by truck in 1967.

Carrie Morgridge had a special interest in dance and had earmarked \$250,000 of that gift to fund a dance studio in partnership with Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, in what would become a new building for Aspen. This aligned well with the vision of Campus Dean Dr. Ann Harris to make the new Aspen facility a home for the arts. The Morgridge gift became the impetus for a capital campaign to raise additional funds for the building. The \$5.5 million, 34,000-square-foot Morgridge Family Academic Center opened in January 2001 across the highway from the Pitkin County Airport. It had three times the space of the old building next to Aspen High School.

As the CMC Foundation continued to engage major donors, a 10-year building plan was formed. Also aiding the effort was a districtwide vote to bypass the restrictions on spending imposed by TABOR. Called "de-Brucing," after the author of the TABOR amendment, the measure allowed the college to retain more revenues from its property tax mill levy, which were increasing due to rising home prices and assessed valuation.

In fall 2001, a new academic building on Spring Valley Campus was opened, named for CMC benefactors Jim and Connie Calaway. Light-filled and spacious, the 38,000-square-foot center housed a 160-seat theater, 15 "smart" classrooms, two computer labs, new photography labs and studio, the Alpine Bank Technical Center with 21 computers where students could get individual or group tutoring, and a room for the interactive video system that connected all CMC campuses to distance learning and to each other.

Under Heelan's leadership, 11 buildings were constructed on CMC campuses.



## A FULBRIGHT

Alumna Dr. Denise Dimon, a professor of economics at the University of San Diego, was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to lecture in South America. Photo: Doug Stewart



The Calaway Academic Building on Spring Valley Campus opened in 2001.



The Calaway Academic Building included the New Space Theatre where Professor Tom Cochran and others finally had a stage for quality theatrical productions, presentations, and lectures. Photo: Doug Stewart

## FOUR GOALS

In the late 1990s, college leadership crafted a blueprint for moving the college into the future. Four goals were articulated that continued to serve as a foundational philosophy in the ensuing years.

The first and perhaps primary goal was to facilitate student access and success. As spelled out in a 1998 CMC Report Card, an avenue to those ends was building new academic centers, libraries, student centers, and residence halls. These would provide "bright, open, warm, and attractive learning environments for our students," the report said.

A student success task force was formed that looked closely at high school students who were at risk of failing to graduate. The task force asked what they would need to be successful in high school and be able to go

on to further their education at CMC. The college won a \$900,000 grant from the US Department of Education to put a plan into effect. The outgrowth was Student Support Services, aimed at helping low-income or disabled students, as well as those who were the first in their families to go to college.

A marketing campaign was launched to target these high school students, tagged with the slogan, "Yes You Can!" Brochures in English and Spanish went out to every junior and senior at every high school in the district. They contained information about higher education options—financial, academic, vocational—with a Yes You Can website for more details. The result of these multifaceted efforts was a 24 percent jump in enrollment in the late 1990s.

The second goal was well-designed vocational, liberal arts degree, and certification programs to prepare students for citizenship, prepare them to enter the workforce and/or enable them to transfer to a four-year college. It updated old programs to make them relevant. Most importantly, it brought all courses to all college centers by means of the interactive video system (IVS). The campuses were wired for high-speed, high-capacity internet. Now insufficient enrollment in courses on smaller campuses was not an obstacle. Courses could be broadcast live from one campus to any other. IVS served over 300 students in 1997.



Photo: Doug Stewart

## FIRST ASCENT YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

A select group of middle and high school students from across the CMC service area gathered at a leadership camp at CMC's Timberline Campus in Leadville during the summer of 1998. Students were recommended by their teachers, counselors, and school principals. The curriculum was tough—testing their mettle in the demanding wilderness of the mountains. The aim was to teach the group teamwork, problem-solving, and communication.

The program was funded by the college, as well as private individuals and organizations, to help rising middle schoolers gain confidence and see their future at college.

Founded by CMC Youth Outreach Coordinator Mariana Velasquez-Schmahl, the camp presented the teens with challenging situations. They were asked to scale a six-story cliff; hike to the summit of Mt. Elbert, Colorado's highest peak; and raft the swift Arkansas River.

"I feel CMC has a one-of-a-kind program for these young people," Velasquez-Schmahl said in a newspaper interview in 1999. "I know of no other program for students aged 13 through 15 which incorporates outdoor experiential activities with the academics of a basic leadership program. I believe the impact of this kind of program on a young person is lifelong."

First Ascent alumni took their newfound confidence into college and beyond. One earned undergraduate honors and went to law school to become an immigration advocate; another earned his engineering degree from Duke. A young woman started a nonprofit educational program in Nepal that looked very similar to First Ascent.





## ED HILL

*Long, Strong Leadership*

Ed Hill's first meeting as a CMC trustee was intense. The agenda included faculty and staff reductions during a time of financial distress. The Denver media were there and TV cameras were rolling. On the drive home, after the very contentious meeting, Hill asked himself, "What have I gotten myself into?" He answered his own question by serving 13 years on the board, 11 as chair.

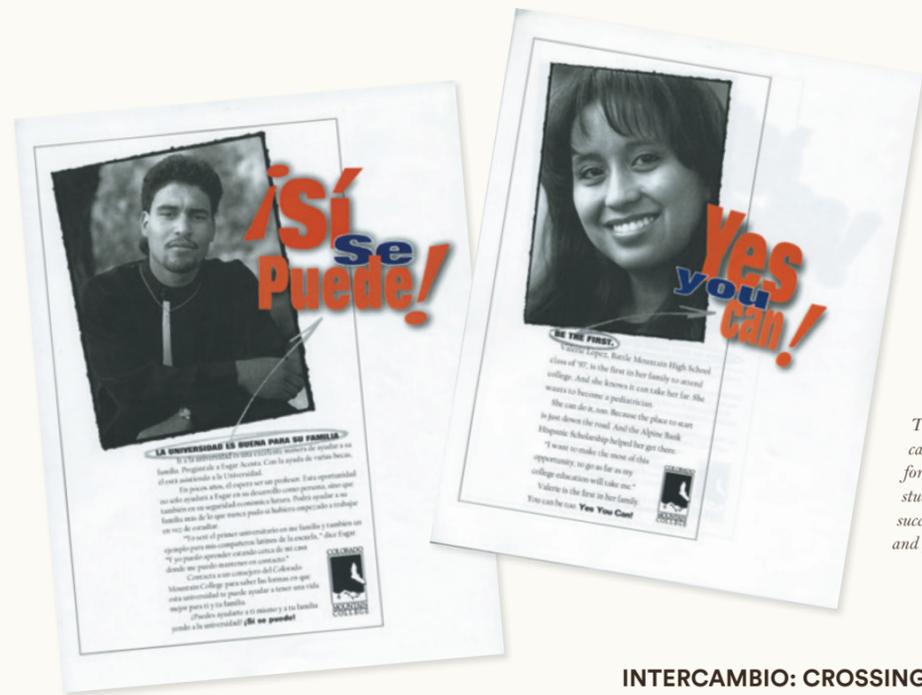
Before coming to the board, Hill was already deeply committed to higher education for the region. He was part of the group of Steamboat Springs leaders who helped resurrect the defunct Yampa Valley College campus and bring it into the CMC District.

On the board, the value of Hill's leadership by consensus was quickly apparent. He was known for his willingness to listen to diverse voices and his ability to calmly sail through stormy waters. Former Steamboat Springs Campus Dean John Vickery remembers a board meeting with Hill as chair, when the Tri-County Taxpayers group was planning to protest the proposed budget. Tensions were so high that police were asked to stand by. "The board passed the budget with protests," remembered Vickery, "and Ed kept the meeting civil. That kind of ended the uprising."

Former President Bob Spuhler also respected Hill's ability to help the college through difficult situations. "I only saw him bristle once during his tenure, and he had many more opportunities for this. He was tremendously respected in the community."

As a president of The First National Bank of Steamboat Springs, Hill also brought solid fiscal analysis to the board. Spuhler believes that Hill's primary contribution was to help the college get "on the path of concentrating on financial responsibility." Always one to praise the contributions of others, Hill said that the greatest accomplishment of the board and college leadership during his tenure was to get voter approval of an increased mill levy that would fund a sustainable future for the college.

The increased funding, Hill said, allowed the college to move forward and "bring it up to the level that it is today—one of the outstanding community colleges in the country. I am proud to be part of CMC."



*The "Yes You Can!" campaign showed the way forward to local high school students, featuring stories of successful, local CMC students and graduates.*

## INTERCAMBIO: CROSSING CULTURES

In this environment, Glenwood Springs Program Director Jonathan Satz launched a new class. Intercambio, Spanish for "exchange," facilitated language learning between native Spanish speakers and native English speakers. Satz' experience as a student was the genesis for this approach. "I did really well in class. I got As on all of my tests, and I memorized all the vocabulary," Satz recalled. "But I was frozen when I tried to use it."

When Satz was on sabbatical teaching advanced second-language English learners in Costa Rica, a student asked if he'd be willing to meet outside of class to practice speaking English. Satz replied, "If you help me with my Spanish, I'll help you with your English." After a few meetings, Satz "recognized that it was easier for me to speak in that situation."

Later, while pursuing his master's degree, Satz built a framework for a guided language exchange

CMC also renewed its commitment to create opportunities for lifelong learning as its third goal. Apparently, that goal was already being met, as noncredit courses continued to have the highest enrollment among CMC programs. The Center for Excellence in the Arts had brought music and visual arts performance and presentation to the district. The college recognized the need to provide for the changing needs of the regional workforce. Computer instruction was in high demand and CMC responded with more classes. Basic classes gave way to internet instruction and the CISCO computer networking program.

The fourth goal acknowledged changing demographics in the region: "to strengthen our region and world by growing partnerships with diverse communities."

**Now insufficient enrollment in courses on smaller campuses was not an obstacle. Courses could be broadcast live from one campus to any other.**



## CARE FOR ANIMALS

Colorado Animal Rescue, Inc. (CARE) was begun by local veterinarians. For nine years the rescue and placement of abandoned, stray, and surrendered animals was done out of the homes of dedicated CARE board members. Working with Spring Valley Campus Dean Nancy Genova, CARE co-founders Cindy Crandall and Jim Calaway opened the doors of a permanent shelter facility at Spring Valley. Built on land that was leased at minimal cost by Colorado Mountain College, the shelter became a refuge for animals in need. It also provided hands-on learning for students in the adjacent CMC veterinary technology program.

**"We're taking strangers and sending them out as friends. We're not living side-by-side, ignoring each other anymore."**

**– Jonathan Satz**

class. CMC Spanish Professor Dr. Laura Marasco asked, "Why don't we do this here?" CMC became the first college in the country to offer a formal class based upon the language exchange concept. Others would follow suit, using CMC's class as their model.

Mayra Muñoz took CMC's Intercambio class twice and later said that Intercambio was "a key that opened a lot of wonderful doors in my life and in my family's life."

"We have two cultures living side-by-side in our valley," said Satz. "For the most part, those two cultures are living separately, passing each other in the supermarket without saying anything. We're taking strangers and sending them out as friends. We're not living side-by-side, ignoring each other anymore."

## INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Armed with these goals and the initiatives to support them, CMC entered the 21st century with a strong purpose and growing outside support, honed to meet new challenges.



*The popular Intercambio program brought together English and Spanish speakers to teach each other their own language and to break down cultural barriers.*



*An interactive video system connected students taking the same class across multiple locations. Photo: Doug Stewart*



## DAVE HARMON

*Nicaragua Campus*

CMC Professor Dave Harmon had a passion to give his students the opportunity to work alongside people living in poverty. He wanted to inspire those students to serve the poor.

In 1989, with student activist Carrie Talcott, he organized the World Awareness and Action Society as part of his ethics class at Spring Valley. He also reached out to Teotecacinte, a small village in northern Nicaragua that had been ravaged by civil war. Between 1989 and 1998, through the Friendship City Exchange, he brought 300 volunteers—both students who got college credit for the work, and faculty—to the town for three-week service projects. He called the volunteers "brigadistas."

"This is not a vacation. If people are looking for an exotic trip to Central America, this is the wrong place. This is living in a small community that is wracked by poverty. It's hard work that we do. We live with them. We work with them," Harmon told the *Glenwood Independent* in December 1998.

The volunteers built water systems, a community garden, a health center, and a high school. CMC Assistant Professor Emmy Neil established a sewing cooperative for the women of the village. President Cynthia Heelan visited in 1996.

Teotecacinte became very personal for Neil's granddaughter Lindsay. In 1993, Emmy invited Lindsay to join her for a few weeks in Teotecacinte. It was a life-changing experience for the 16-year-old. Harmon had been looking for a high school student to help raise money for a school and Lindsay volunteered. She launched the Million Penny Drive to raise money by visiting area high schools and speaking about the work of the Friendship City Exchange. The fundraising was successful and the school opened in 1995 with 156 students.

Students learned not just about a developing country, but about themselves. They learned that people in poverty can lead happy, fulfilling lives. By living and working beside people in the community, they learned to appreciate what they took for granted. "I've come to realize that life isn't about having what you want, but wanting what you have," said Lindsay Neil, in a story in the *Chicago Tribune* in September 1998.

# Excellence and Innovation

“What gives me the most satisfaction as a teacher?  
I love those ‘light bulb’ moments in the classroom  
when someone finally gets it. I love seeing my  
young men and women walk across that stage and  
move on to the next adventure.”

– Professor Jimmy Westlake



Colorado  
Mountain  
College

In the new millennium, Colorado Mountain College evolved and matured along with its communities. The small, scattered, and insular towns of the 1960s were now connected by robust economies, better roadways, and the new information highway. CMC had successfully weathered economic hardships, and changed with the times without losing its plucky, independent, small mountain town character.

President Heelan reiterated the goals of CMC, couched in her vision for the college. “It’s essential to have a sense of what it means to be connected to the rest of the globe, to have a sense of what it means to be a global culture and do away with stereotypes,” she said in a *Community College Times* story in June 2000. Heelan drilled down to three aspects of that mission: develop a well-trained and relevant workforce, prepare people for citizenship, and enable them to use emerging technology.

That year she began serving as chairman of the board of the American Association of Community Colleges, a position that did much to strengthen CMC’s reputation nationwide. The president of CMC now led the same organization that once supplied a slide show to a small group of itinerant volunteers who were hoping to start a local district college in the mountains of Colorado.

After Heelan retired from CMC in 2003, the board turned to a proven leader in Dr. Robert Spuhler, who had held various administrative positions at the college since 1988. With his broad experience as an administrator, Spuhler brought a depth of knowledge about the college and how it operated. During his tenure, he had been vice president for administrative services, dean of student services, and vice president of student affairs. As vice president for administrative services under Dennis Mayer, he helped the college



## SNOWMASTODON

*Dig of a Lifetime*

In October 2010, a bulldozer operator who was clearing dirt for a large reservoir project near Snowmass Village unearthed a large brown bone. He showed it to his supervisor, who showed it to his boss. “Cow”, they said. The dozer operator was skeptical. He kept on moving dirt. Then he brought up some very large rib bones with his blade. These were not cow bones, he knew. Further inquiry revealed that the bones were actually the ribs of an Ice Age mammoth.

That chance discovery quickly developed into the most significant high-altitude fossil site in the world and the largest fossil dig in Colorado history. In just a few short weeks of digging on the site, over tens of thousands of bones were found representing seven Ice Age mammals, including mammoth, camel, deer, and horse. The site also was a first discovery of mastodon and Jefferson’s ground sloth in the state.

During the dig, teachers from around the Roaring Fork Valley were invited to help excavate the fossils. CMC anthropology teacher Sandy Jackson and her husband, retired faculty member Dr. Jim Campbell, jumped at the chance and had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in a world-class fossil dig. It was right up Jackson’s alley. She had led students on expeditions to the archeology-rich Grand Gulch area in southeastern Utah and conducted excavations on an Anasazi site the college owned in southern Colorado.

True teachers, Jackson and Campbell saw the unprecedented learning opportunity, and invited students Alex Curtiss, James Callahan, Ronald Hendricks, Wade Hall, and Bryan Schrimmer to join them on the dig.

get on a solid financial footing after the turmoil of the early 1980s. He had provided the same stewardship during Cynthia Heelan’s term as president.

His conservative financial philosophy served him well when he became CMC’s seventh president. He put the brakes on new staff hires, tying operating costs to student enrollment numbers, according to Linda English, vice president for financial affairs. His direction also added to reserve funds which financed construction of new buildings during his tenure and beyond. He introduced a philosophy that reserves had to equal 25

**“Bob Spuhler was quite an excellent caretaker of resources.”**

**– Doris Dewton**

percent of operating costs. “Bob Spuhler was quite an excellent caretaker of resources,” said former board of trustees chair Doris Dewton in a 2016 interview.

Many of the changes put into play in the late 1990s came to fruition in the new century. Among the drivers were speed-of-light changes in technology, most notably the internet. It brought unfettered access to information and global communication. It was a revolution embraced wholeheartedly by CMC.

Along with the expansion of technological access, the college planned for facilities upgrades. Major building projects were targeted for Edwards, Breckenridge, Steamboat Springs, Chaffee County, and Rifle. Many of these would require funding beyond the usual revenue sources, so the college sought private donors who would support its mission.

CMC Foundation CEO Alexandra Yajko led the fundraising effort across multiple counties and communities. She developed support from diverse and unexpected sources, while also raising the profile of the college as an organization worthy of philanthropic gifts.

“It was the first time that we really went out on a concerted effort in a number of communities to try to raise money from the local people on a smaller level, in order to get them involved,” said Doris Dewton, who was the chairman of the board of trustees at the time. Dewton said she was surprised at the number of people she contacted in the Vail Valley, many of whom were second home owners, who did not know about CMC. “So part of this fund-raising effort was in fact, friend-raising.”



Foundation CEO Alexandra Yajko with donor Pam Szedelyi at the grand opening of the new CMC campus in Rifle. Photo: Ed Kosmicki



## TOP FIVE OUTDOOR COLLEGE

In 2003, *Backpacker* magazine featured Colorado Mountain College as one of the “top five outdoor-oriented colleges or universities in America.”



Groundbreaking ceremony for the new CMC building in Edwards.

## NEW HOME IN VAIL VALLEY

In 2001, the college received a welcome offer of land in Edwards. Representatives from Eagle County and the Eagle County School District saw an opportunity to house all education—kindergarten through college—within a mile of each other in Edwards. With most of the county’s population growth occurring west of Vail, CMC leaders were looking to consolidate the Vail and Eagle operations in the mid-valley. Tom Stone, county commissioner at the time, enlisted support from Michael Gallagher, a fellow commissioner, and Eagle County School Board President Tim McMichael to establish the Partnership for Education—16 acres in the Berry Creek area near Edwards set aside for CMC. Eagle County Attorney Bryan Treu authored the agreement in 2002 for the land to be leased initially and parceled out in smaller increments.

“We wanted to make sure [CMC] developed it,” Treu later told Vail Daily, adding that the collaboration was “one of the most rewarding things I’ve been involved with.”

Peter Bergh, a local architect and designer, donated his time to create the campus site plan, including a future location for residence halls. With land and site plans in hand, collegewide Facilities Director Mike Sawyer, Campus Dean Peggy Curry and their teams set to work planning a building that would accommodate the needs of the quickly growing region. The new CMC building in Edwards was finished in 2004, but was soon outgrown. This time, Curry worked with new collegewide Facilities Director Sam Skramstad to guide the 36,000 square-foot addition, completed in 2011. CMC paid off the 50-year lease in 2014 and took possession of the full 16-acre parcel, 38 years ahead of schedule.

The new Battle Mountain High School was built directly across the street from



The campus expanded in 2010.



The new Edwards location consolidated CMC’s operations from Vail and Eagle. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

CMC, giving those students unfettered access to college classes. Partly as a result of this, by 2014 the Eagle County School District had 20 percent of high schoolers enrolled concurrently at Colorado Mountain College, making it one of Colorado’s top 10 programs.

As the land was deeded to CMC, Carrie Benway, an Eagle County School District board member who was on the original governing board of the partnership, observed that “CMC has exceeded our expectations both as to the timing and quality of the academic campus.”

## Ronald Southard and Carole Perrin donated 36 acres near Buena Vista.

### GENEROSITY IN CHAFFEE COUNTY

Chaffee County residents were well aware of the college and its benefits. Classes had been offered there since 1971. But because Chaffee County was outside the CMC taxing district, residents had to raise all funds for a new building from external sources. They rose to the challenge. Ronald Southard and Carole Perrin donated 36 acres near Buena Vista. Local bank president and CMC Foundation Chair Charlie Forster led the citizens' effort to raise most of the funds. The new Chaffee County Academic Center opened for classes in 2005.

### ENERGY COMPANIES STEP UP

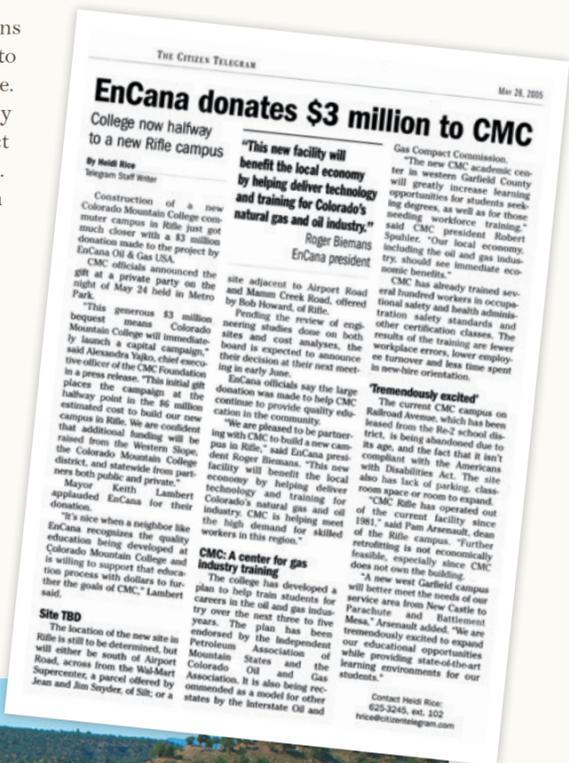
Western Garfield County was rich in natural gas, and exploration companies were drilling feverishly. The region was producing the lion's share of natural gas in the state. Skilled workers were in high demand, so CMC launched a process technology program to train students for entry-level jobs in the energy extraction industry. At the same time, service workers for the resort towns upriver were also expanding the population.

With all this growth, the former school building on Railroad Avenue was no longer adequate to provide CMC services to the Rifle community. The college began looking for land upon which to build a new, \$6 million building. Airport Land Partners, headed by Bob Howard, provided the answer, donating a 13-acre site across from the Garfield County Airport.

Sue Daley, who once directed the development of CMC Breckenridge, was now living near Rifle amidst the energy boom. She again saw opportunities for the college. Working with Alexandra Yajko and the CMC Foundation, Daley was instrumental in securing major support from energy companies. In 2005, two of the leading energy companies operating in Garfield County, Encana

and Williams, made sizeable donations to kick-start a capital campaign to build a new academic center for Rifle. Encana's \$3 million gift, followed by Williams' \$1 million, put the project well on the road to completion. The 34,000-square-foot Encana Academic Building, with a Williams Technology Wing featuring science and computer labs, opened its doors to students in 2007.

Initially named "West Garfield Campus," to represent the region it served, the new facility also received a \$500,000 grant from the Energy Impact Fund of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. This financed the construction of an auditorium addition to the academic building that became popular for community events.



The Encana Academic Building at Rifle. Photo: Altitude Filmworks



The Chaffee County Academic Center in Buena Vista was built primarily from private gifts resulting from a campaign led by Charlie Forster. Photo: Ed Kosmicki



To celebrate the grand opening of the West Garfield Campus in Rifle, CMC invited local ranchers to burn their brand into a permanent display. Photo: Ed Kosmicki



Marge Lowderback graduated with her Associate Degree at age 80, inspiring others to persevere with their dreams.

At the grand opening, CMC invited local ranchers to burn their brand into a wooden wall. It became a permanent display at the campus, honoring the contributions of ranching to the region's economy and culture.

The following year, Shell, which had an ongoing oil shale processing project north of Rifle, gave \$600,000 to the college to support the process technology program. CMC had also received \$40,000 over two years for scholarships from Encana for the Marge Lowderback Memorial Scholarship Endowment. Marge had graduated from CMC with an associate degree in 2002 at 80 years old, and passed away a few weeks afterward. She was remembered for her great sense of humor and her burning desire for everyone to continue learning throughout their lives.

In Lowderback's memory, the CMC Foundation established the endowed scholarship. An annual fundraiser for the fund was the "Mud for Marge" competition at the Garfield County Fairgrounds in Rifle, where beat-up junker cars plowed through a mud bog. CMC President Bob Spuhler joined in, plowing his



President Robert Spuhler went all in with his Jeep at Mud for Marge. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

Jeep Cherokee through the mud with a group of CMC staffers aboard. This was followed by a monster truck duel. The events fueled the fund and allowed CMC to give thousands of dollars in scholarships to incoming students at the Rifle campus.

Genevieve Clough of Rifle was one of CMC's most generous and beloved supporters. Following an initial gift of \$3.5 million in 2008, she further left \$4 million for scholarships to be endowed in perpetuity. Each year, the fund supports graduates of Coal Ridge, Grand Valley, and Rifle high schools with scholarships. From the time of its inception through 2017, the Clough Scholarship had provided over \$3.8 million in scholarship support to more than 510 students from western Garfield County.

### ARTSHARE

To build and enhance community through arts and culture, the Colorado Mountain College Foundation created ArtShare in 2010. This successor to the Center of Excellence in the Arts continued the college's longstanding collaboration with the arts communities in the region to bring cultural enrichment to CMC campuses.

Leadville native and artist Alice Beauchamp directed the efforts, bringing diverse, provocative, and high-level arts programming to campuses and public spaces. The ArtShare Gallery at the CMC Central Services office in Glenwood Springs exhibited a regular series of visual art exhibits. The gallery



Photo: Tyler Stabileford

## JIMMY WESTLAKE

*Stellar Professor*

Science Professor Jimmy Westlake took a career detour to study psychology at the University of Alaska, but the universe and its celestial wonders called him back.

“I missed astronomy too much, and Alaska was too far from family,” Westlake recalled. “I was looking for the same type of mountainous, clear-sky environment as Alaska, so CMC caught my attention.”

For 19 years, Westlake taught astronomy and physics at Steamboat Springs, in the classroom and online. In Routt County and beyond he was an ambassador for the universe.

Jimmy hosted public star parties and singalongs at state parks, wrote a monthly “Celestial News” column for *Steamboat Today*, and frequently answered calls from people curious about celestial objects. “I enjoy helping people learn about the sky, the universe, and our place in it,” Westlake said.

On campus, he launched the Sky Club, which drew more than 50 members. The club hosted the profitable Screamboast haunted house each October, using the proceeds to fund a spring field trip to major observatories.

Westlake’s wife, Linda, worked as an accounting technician at CMC Steamboat Springs for 12 years. During their time, they accompanied Sky Club students to visit observatories from Texas to Hawaii, along with trips to Alaska to see the northern lights and to Yellowstone to observe stars and planets in a “really dark location.”

Year-round, Westlake took awe-inspiring photos of the night sky. Between 2000 and 2017, NASA’s Astronomy Picture of the Day website published 26 of his photos.

Westlake retired from full-time teaching in May 2017, but continued teaching online astronomy classes, and traveling to national parks and monuments with the best dark skies.

“I love seeing my young men and women walk across that stage and move on to the next adventure,” he recalled. “But my very favorite moments are when I show someone the Moon or Saturn through a telescope for the first time and hear their reaction. Priceless.”



Genevieve Clough (center) with the 2010 Clough Scholarship fellows. Photo: Ed Kosmicki



ArtShare showcased national talent at CMC through Calaway Series performances.

exhibits and programs presented a lively mixture of educational, contemporary, and historic art, including notable artwork of faculty, students, and local community artists. Beauchamp would often crate the art and transport it for display at various CMC campuses.

“I want to find the movement of the living culture,” Beauchamp said. “Artists are making music now, making art now. It’s alive right now and I want to catch it as it comes by.”

The Calaway Honors Series was a longstanding ArtShare program, underwritten by Carbondale philanthropist Jim Calaway. This series of performances explored musical genres and expressions that ranged from classical opera to avant garde string ensembles. Each performance was dedicated to a supporter of CMC, honoring them for their contributions to the college. Based at the Spring Valley theater, the series also scheduled performances at other campuses such as Breckenridge, Leadville, and Rifle, offering additional cultural opportunities to those communities.

In 2009, Beauchamp met with George and Patti Stranahan of Carbondale, who shared a long-time interest in arts, philanthropy, and education. For about 30 years, the Stranahans had collected photographs from the masters, mostly black-and-white prints, including some of the most iconic names in 20th century photography. George was himself an accomplished photographer who had known, or knew, many of the artists. The collection included original prints by Ansel Adams, Henri Cartier-Bresson, André Kertész, Paul Strand, Margaret Bourke-White, and Mary Ellen Mark, among other many others.



## PREHISTORIC ENTOMOLOGIST

While Dave Kohls was academic program director at CMC Rifle, he took a CMC class from Bob Koper. Inspired by that, Kohls began searching for fossilized insects near Rifle as a hobby. His donation of more than 29,000 specimens of insect fossils makes up 90 percent of the Smithsonian Institution’s collection in this category. He also gave about 42,000 pieces to the Natural History Museum at the University of Colorado Boulder. Together the two collections are the largest in the world of their type and age of fossil materials. Photo: Dave Kohls



ArtShare’s visual arts exhibits showcased local and regional artists such as marble sculptor Greg Tonozzi, who began his sculpting career with CMC classes. Photo: Doug Stewart

planned street-level events and workshops. From break dancing to plein air painting, ArtShare raised the level of artistic experience for viewers and creators alike.

## PLAN FOR A RAINY DAY

Over several years, as the college saw unprecedented growth in enrollment and major building construction, Spuhler and the board of trustees had been planning for future changes. For many citizens of the communities on either side of the Continental Divide, the 1980s energy bust had been an important wake-up call that was not soon forgotten. Natural gas development in 2007 to 2009 had old timers, including CMC, cautiously preparing for the inevitable slowdown. Under Spuhler a healthy reserve fund was established that helped the college weather the eventual economic downturn.

This was the setting for Dr. Stanley Jensen, who was selected by the trustees to become

“They’re meant to be moved around, hung on walls, and in halls,” said George. “They don’t need to be in a box in the basement.”

Following the donors’ wishes, Beauchamp hung the collection at as many CMC campuses as possible so the work could be appreciated across the college district. After the collection had been in public circulation awhile, Stranahan reflected on its impact. “I hear back from people who have seen the collection. They tell me, ‘I never knew black-and-white photography could be so intense, so personal, so grabbing.’ It’s a new experience for them. It’s what education is about.”

Always looking to connect as many people as possible to the creative process, Beauchamp

**“Artists are making music now, making art now. It’s alive right now and I want to catch it as it comes by.”**  
– Alice Beauchamp



Photo: Ed Kosmicki

## GENEVIEVE CLOUGH

*Extraordinary Generosity*

Genevieve Clough of Rifle once said she led a “very, very ordinary life.” Tell that to the 510 students to date who have received Clough Fellowship college scholarships to attend CMC and other colleges and universities.

Clough, a schoolteacher, and her husband, Bill, a sheep rancher, were blessed late in life with wealth from oil and gas royalties. After Bill’s death in 2006, Genevieve turned to philanthropic giving for higher education.

“I just don’t think you can grow if you’re not educated,” Clough aid in an interview with the *Glenwood Springs Post Independent*.

In 2008, she launched two scholarship endowments, one through the CMC Foundation and another through the Western Colorado Community Foundation. To initially fund CMC Foundation scholarships, she gave \$3.5 million. Additional gifts and her bequest added a \$4 million endowment for scholarships in perpetuity, making her \$7.5 million the largest gift to the CMC Foundation to date.

Both Clough Fellowship programs are for Parachute, Rifle, Silt, and New Castle high school graduates, as well as recent GED achievers from those same communities.

The Clough Fellowship is geared to, in her words, the “middle bunch of kids that make good grades but won’t get scholarships.” Fellows must also show participation in community service and a solid vocational or professional career plan.

Clough passed away in 2010 at age 86, but her generosity lives on.

“Her belief was that everyone is special,” said Carol Efting, coordinator of scholarships and records for the CMC Foundation. “And those with the motivation and commitment to successfully achieve an education should have the financial resources to do so.”

Clough’s giving extended beyond the fellowships. Her gift to the CMC Foundation helped build the Clough Auditorium at the CMC West Garfield Campus in Rifle, and through the Clough Family Foundation she assisted an orphanage in Zimbabwe.

“She was the most generous, selfless, amazing creature God made on this planet,” said her granddaughter, Stormy Anderson. “She was one of the smartest people I’ve ever met. She was driven. She was precise. She was fantastic. And she had the biggest heart.”



## DORIS DEWTON

*Trustee and More*

“I’ve always been a big advocate for higher education,” said Doris Dewton. That advocacy, combined with vision and leadership, was reflected in her long-term service on the CMC Board of Trustees and the CMC Foundation Board.

Dewton moved to Edwards in 1994, retiring “young” from a career in Washington, D.C., as a federal energy regulator and later as a petroleum industry lobbyist. In the latter role, she helped negotiate a new formula for cleaner-burning gasoline under the Clean Air Act.

In Edwards, Dewton jumped into volunteer activities, including a successful campaign to exempt CMC’s property tax revenues from the constraints of the state’s TABOR law. In 2001, outgoing Eagle County CMC Trustee Don Salanty recruited her to run for the board.

“I became convinced of the good work of CMC, and the reality of the situation of local people trying to go to college while working, which has only become more intense,” Dewton said.

She served as trustee from 2001 to 2009, and was board president for six of those years.

Her years on the board brought needed investments across the college district to rebuild aging structures and build new facilities, tailoring the new structures to meet the academic needs of each community.

She also forged a closer relationship between the trustees and the CMC foundation, to focus local fundraising on local campus building improvements. She continued this approach while serving on the Foundation board from 2009 to 2016.

Doris served on the CMC Vail Valley advisory council and was a co-founder of the HERO scholarship program for that area. Scholarship work is rewarding, according to Dewton, because CMC staff works closely with recipients to ensure their success.

“People have dreams who don’t always have means,” Dewton said, adding that scholarships and academic support make a big difference in how those dreams turn out.

In 2017, Dewton joined the CMC Board of Overseers, a group of accomplished professionals convened annually to provide diverse outside perspectives to the CMC president. Later that year, she was elected to a third term as trustee.

president after Spuhler retired. Jensen brought experience in higher education as an administrator, faculty member, and consultant to colleges across the country. He emphasized continuous process improvement and team building, often reminding employees, “Don’t tackle someone wearing the same color jersey.”

By 2009, natural gas pricing was flat. Companies had cut back drastically on their drilling programs, and the entire country was suffering a severe recession. But the college remained in a good financial position. This was due largely to conservative fiscal planning and the fact that CMC remained independent of the state community college system that was being affected by large budget cuts. The college received about 73 percent of its income from property tax revenues. About 13 percent of its funding came from the state, to-the-tune-of about \$6.7 million.

“We will see a lot of interesting times in higher education in the years ahead,” Jensen was quoted in a *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* article from 2009. “But I am glad to be here, because some other community colleges are not so fortunate.”

The *Post Independent* reported that CMC expected to see a 2.5 percent cut in state funding in 2010. Chief Financial Officer Linda English told the paper that 25 percent of CMC’s general fund was dedicated as reserve funding. “That means we have two years’ worth of state funding set aside,” she said.

Further, CMC expected and was prepared for a decrease in property tax revenues over the next several years as property values dropped and natural gas drilling slowed. Companies like Encana and Williams accounted for the greatest share of property taxes in Garfield County.

But, as in the 1980s, the college also expected to see enrollment numbers go up as people lost their jobs and came to CMC to retrain for new careers, and college-age students chose a more cost-effective means of getting a college education by staying closer to home. CMC continued to have



## ALUMNUS CHOSEN FOR US STAMP

In 2001, the United States Postal Service issued a new international rate postage stamp featuring a photograph of Acadia National Park taken by CMC professional photography graduate Carr Clifton. According to *Outdoor Photographer Magazine*, “Among the great landscape photographers working today, Carr Clifton is one of the most influential and respected.”

the lowest college tuition in the state, at \$45 per credit hour for in-district students and \$75 for in-state. Mostly as a result of these factors, the West Garfield Campus in Rifle recorded a 29 percent increase in enrollment in 2010.

A study by the US Department of Education reported that community colleges accounted for nearly half of the nation’s total higher education enrollment. Community colleges were meeting the need for an educated workforce and they were providing affordable and attainable education for a broad range of students.

## GROWTH IN SUMMIT COUNTY

Summit County had experienced steady growth since the Eisenhower Tunnel beneath the Continental Divide was completed, creating easier access from the Front Range. Communities at the northern end of the county had swelled with newcomers, most of whom worked in the expanding tourism-based economy. For several years, students attended CMC classes in a cramped modular building and other rented locations in Silverthorne. There were discussions about a joint building project with the Town of Silverthorne.



But in 2000, CMC purchased the former Snow Bank/WestStar Bank building in Dillon, creating a permanent learning location for that area.

In Breckenridge, increasing student enrollment prompted the college to construct a new building in 2009. It was a state-of-the-art facility that combined modern technology and energy-saving efficiencies. The 34,000-square-foot building occupied a 16-acre lot at 107 Denison Placer Road, donated to the college by the town. It included a 240-seat auditorium; a professional kitchen for the culinary program; health, science, and medical wings; and a cyber café.

The new building replaced the 100-year-old former Breckenridge Town Hall building that CMC had occupied since the 1970s. The \$14 million price tag for the new academic center was offset by the \$2.25 million sale of the old building



Patti and George Stranahan donated their collection of photographs of 20th century masters for public viewing on campus. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

back to the town. Other gifts came from various state and local nonprofit organizations, businesses, and Copper Mountain Resort.

Later, after ten years of strong growth, the college would take the unprecedented step of leasing four townhouses adjacent to CMC Breckenridge for student housing. This would be the first time housing for students, staff, and faculty was added to a non-residential campus.

Ironically, the only county that had voted against joining the CMC District would ultimately benefit from an increasingly vibrant environment for higher education.

## BACHELOR’S DEGREES

In the second decade of the new millennium, Colorado Mountain College was pioneering new territory as it had from the beginning. In a rapidly changing world, CMC graduates would need to understand the complex connections among business, the environment, and society. New programs already supported this trend.

In a major shift, the college sought to offer four-year baccalaureate degrees for the first time. The CMC Board of Trustees gave its blessing in November 2009.

“This will allow the residents living in our 12,000-square-mile service area to have access to an affordable alternative in higher education,” President Jensen said. The idea was not to compete with existing four-year colleges and universities, but to offer the opportunity for a bachelor’s degree to students living in a district the size of Maryland, where such access had not been available.

The college had conducted surveys in the communities within the district, asking what degrees residents would favor. The answers included teacher education, nursing, health service administration, business, hospitality management, resort management, and environmental studies.

It was not a simple matter for a historically two-year college to offer baccalaureate degrees. Because the authority to award four-year degrees was not included in CMC’s original statutory role and mission, the state legislature had to pass a bill allowing the college to do so.



## COLORADO’S BEST

The Colorado Veterinary Medical Association honored alumna Leslie Rockey (above) with its 2006 Veterinary Technician of the Year Award. In 2010, Professor Nancy Sheffield was honored as the Vet Tech of the year by the Colorado Association of Certified Veterinary Technicians. The awards recognized exceptional clinical competence, a caring commitment to animal welfare, and outstanding leadership ability.



## MONITORING THE ENVIRONMENT

The Timberline Analytical Laboratory at the campus in Leadville was developed to analyze samples for restoration and monitoring projects for commercial clients and government agencies. It provided real-life experience, an essential part of hands-on education for natural resource management and science students. Similar facilities could only be found in Grand Junction, Steamboat Springs, and on the Front Range.



Natural gas production near Rifle provided strong revenue for the college. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

In January 2010, State Senator and former CMC student Dan Gibbs of Summit County introduced a bill that would allow the college to offer bachelor's degrees. The bill passed overwhelmingly on March 18 and granted CMC authority to offer up to five bachelor's degrees. Colorado Governor Bill Ritter came to the new CMC facility in Breckenridge to sign the bill and offer congratulations.

Beyond legislative approval, the plan needed to pass muster with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education as well as the Higher Learning Commission, which granted CMC accreditation. Approval from both agencies came late in the spring of 2011, barely in time to recruit a class for the fall. CMC announced that two bachelor's degrees would be offered: Bachelor of Science in business administration and Bachelor of Arts in sustainable studies. Over the next four years three additional degrees were added, and the college officially evolved into a four-year degree-granting institution.



The new 34,000-square-foot building in Breckenridge opened in 2009. Photo: BillyDoran.com

## Rifle recorded a 29 percent increase in enrollment in 2010.

### MAKING IT SUSTAINABLE

CMC, along with hundreds of colleges and universities in the country, had been working to increase sustainability on campus. On September 25, 2009, President Jensen had signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. The goal of the initiative was to reduce carbon emissions, reduce environmental impacts, develop sustainable operations and programs, and support education for sustainability.

CMC created a climate action plan and set as one of its goals to obtain 15 percent of its electricity usage from alternative sources. Buildings were also retrofitted with energy-efficient lighting and heating, and energy use monitors. CMC committed to reduce its production of greenhouse gases by 12.5 percent. The goal was to be carbon-neutral by 2020. To meet this ambitious goal, the college increased its sustainable construction practices.



## FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

After graduating from CMC Steamboat Springs in 2001, Noelle Brigden went on to earn a PhD from Cornell, a postdoctoral fellowship at Brown University, and a Fulbright scholarship. Her doctoral research focused on the violence and uncertainty that confronted Central American migrants. She was later awarded a highly competitive invitation to be Visiting Associate Research Scholar at Princeton.

In Edwards, the academic center expansion was constructed according to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards. The expansion doubled the size of the building and added a student center, café, career center, classrooms, and an emergency simulation room where firefighters and EMTs could practice their skills. It also included a 500-square-foot greenhouse that supported a sustainable cuisine program with fresh produce.

Sustainable construction was also applied to the new academic center at Steamboat Springs. The 60,000-square-foot building was built to LEED and student standards. The design was also energy efficient, with a geo-exchange system, to both heat and cool. The new academic center replaced three energy-inefficient buildings—Monson, Bogue, and



The teaching kitchen at CMC Breckenridge provided a professional learning environment for CMC Culinary Institute apprentices and lifelong learners. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

Willett halls—constructed in the 1960s as part of the original Yampa Valley College.

CMC Rifle instructors and students developed an experimental biofuels processing facility. Grass and other local crops were broken down into sugar and converted to butanol. Using the facility, Associate Professor of Integrated Energy Dr. Dennis Zhang received a patent for a highly efficient process he developed to produce oil from algae.

In 2012, solar energy students helped install a solar array in Rifle that produced 103 kilowatts of electricity. Students helped install a similar array in Leadville, one of the first high-altitude solar farms in the United States.

### THE ISAACSON SCHOOL

CMC was also out front in digital technology. In 2012 the college unveiled a program aimed at preparing students for the evolving digital landscape. The Isaacson School for New Media was named after best-selling biographer Walter



## CMC FIRE ACADEMY

*Born from the Flames*

In the 1970s, a dangerous fire broke out at a maintenance building in Vail. The Vail Fire Department beat back the blaze, but the fire served a vital warning to the community's volunteer firefighters. Serious professional training was needed.

Jim Spell, a volunteer who fought that blaze, was one of the Vail firefighters who came to CMC to request a fire science degree program. Classes began in 1978. "We had enough advanced degrees in our ranks that we could teach classes as well as attend others. Collectively we could learn to be better firefighters, and get an associate degree in the process," Spell said. But there were unexpected challenges beyond the classroom.

"Most of the early fire science archives were lost to water damage," recalled Spell. "The CMC A-frame building was next to the creek, a creek prone to spring runoff flooding. In CMC's tradition of truly helping students, firefighters who had lost their paperwork were allowed to test out of most courses they had previously taken en route to their degree."

What began as a response to an urgent local need became the CMC Fire Academy at Edwards, offering six fire science and four emergency medical certifications. Some classes, degrees, and certificates were also offered in Summit County and Leadville.

"CMC is providing a very vital need for our local communities," said Michael Trujillo, director of CMC health science and public safety programs.

Fire science combined classroom instruction with live fire training at CMC's facility in Dotsero. The four-story Bob Spuhler CMC Training Tower and a fire flashover simulator gave cadets and working firefighters direct experience with fire in a controlled setting. The basic fire science certificate produced graduates who are ready to work as professional firefighters.

"We give them a basic entry-level skill set," Trujillo said. "They still go through a tremendous amount of training with their agency once they are hired, but they have the basic skill set to get started. That's what the agencies want."

Spell received his fire science degree from CMC in 1998. In addition to pioneering local fire fighter training, he spent 33 years as a professional firefighter with Vail Fire and Emergency Services. During his tenure he was selected for the original Colorado Governor's Safety Committee. He held the rank of Captain for the last 20 of his years with Vail.



Photo: Ed Kosmicki

## J. ROBERT YOUNG

*Creator of Promising Futures*

J. Robert “Bob” Young earned many accolades in his career, but none perhaps as heartwarming as the thanks he received from Latino students he supported on their pathway to a college degree.

Young, founder and chairman of Alpine Bank, was a strong supporter of CMC from the time he founded his first bank in Carbondale in 1973. “We started in the early 1970s and CMC began in 1967,” he recalled in a CMC eNews story in 2009. “Every time we looked at where we wanted to open a bank, we asked if CMC had a campus there ... CMC has been a real pillar of educational excellence in every community we serve.”

In 1996, Young established the Alpine Bank Hispanic-Latino Scholarship. His goals were to promote diversity in the CMC student body and to open the door to a college education to qualified Latino high school graduates. The scholarships cover the cost of tuition, books, and fees, for two years.

Young grew up in Kansas, graduated from Wichita State University and moved to Colorado in 1965, taking a job as a federal bank examiner in Summit County. He saw an opportunity to open a bank in the underserved Roaring Fork Valley. Over the ensuing years he opened banks across western Colorado, later expanding to 38 locations across the state.

His generosity toward CMC didn’t end with the scholarships. In each year following the college’s 25th anniversary he matched CMC employee contributions, up to \$25,000. For CMC’s 50th anniversary he doubled that amount. He also made substantial leadership gifts to capital campaigns.

A strong sense of the importance of relationships and connection to the community drove his business model. Besides supporting CMC, Alpine Bank supported countless organizations in its service area.

It added up to a stable banking business with loyal, long-term employees. In 2001, Alpine Bank was named Colorado Company of the Year and repeatedly has been named one of the best companies in Colorado for working families.

In 2010, Young was inducted into the Colorado Business Hall of Fame, which honors Colorado business leaders for their professional contributions to the state, the ethical manner in which they’ve conducted business, and their philanthropic contributions.

# CLIMB beyond

with a bachelor’s degree

Isaacson, who penned biographies of Steve Jobs, Benjamin Franklin, Albert Einstein, and Henry Kissinger. Isaacson was president and CEO of the Aspen Institute, and former managing editor of *Time* magazine, and former chairman and CEO of the Cable News Network (CNN). He was persuaded to lend his name to the new school by his colleague at the Aspen Institute, longtime CMC benefactor Jim Calaway. The new school soon developed a reputation for teaching hands-on applications of digital media in real-world situations.

The program initially offered focus areas in digital journalism, digital media production, and digital marketing and design.

## OPENING DOORS

In keeping with its goals to offer accessible, affordable higher education, and to engage with the diverse populations of the district, CMC won grants to offer Student Support Services (SSS)

at its residential campuses. Part of the federally funded TRIO programs, SSS provided aid for low income and disabled students, as well as those who were the first in their families to attend college. In 2012, CMC won a \$2.2 million grant to expand Student Support Services to Edwards and Rifle. And in 2015, the college received a \$4.3 million grant to expand SSS to all 11 locations.

In addition, CMC received a \$2.6 million TRIO grant to fund the Upward Bound program. Upward Bound focused on enabling more students to graduate from high school and enroll in and graduate from college. The grant allowed CMC to focus on the high schools in Garfield, Eagle, and Lake Counties, providing tutoring, as well as career and financial aid counseling.

For students of all ages struggling with life’s challenges, the CMC Foundation created the No



President Stan Jensen (far right), trustees and staff welcomed Colorado Governor Bill Ritter to CMC Breckenridge where he signed the bachelor’s degree bill and offered congratulations. Photo: Ed Kosmicki



The new academic center at Steamboat Springs replaced the original buildings of Yampa Valley College. Photo: David Patterson Photography



The “green” expansion at Edwards. Photo: Ed Kosmicki



Energy companies provided support for concurrently enrolled high school students to learn technical skills. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

Barriers Fund. The goal was to remove unexpected financial barriers for students who were beginning or continuing their education at CMC. The funds could be used for tuition, living expenses, books, work or career clothing, bus passes, and other necessities. The fund was established in honor of Alexandra Yajko, who retired in 2010 after 33 years at CMC. During 19 years as CEO of the foundation, she helped raise more than \$34 million for students and educational enhancements.

More and more high school students discovered opportunities to get a head start on college or career through concurrent enrollment—taking college credit courses while in high school. At some campuses, students could not only earn credit for academic classes, but also gain career and technology skills. The program offered certifications in nurse aide, culinary arts, welding, and early childhood education. Energy companies such as Encana, Bill Barrett Corporation, and Chevron provided additional support for the career-track classes offered through CMC Rifle.

## CENTRAL SUPPORT

CMC’s administrative arm, the District Office, had evolved with the college. As the number of locations, staff, student enrollment, services, and programs grew, so did the need for larger office space. The first administrative office preceded the academic buildings and occupied a small location in downtown Glenwood Springs.

In 1994, the Delaney and Balcomb families had donated the building at Ninth and Grand to provide additional space for District Office staff. The building was dedicated as the Michelle Balcomb Building in honor of her service as a CMC faculty member and later as a trustee.

The first floor of the building still housed the Dobbin House furniture store, so staff worked on floors above and below until the store’s lease ran out. During remodeling, a crew of work release inmates from the Rifle Honor Camp was set to the task of excavating the unfinished half of the basement by hand. With buckets and wheelbarrows, they loaded dirt onto a conveyor belt to a truck waiting in the alley. Along the way they came across artifacts from Glenwood Springs’ historic past, including tools used at a blacksmith shop.



## TERRY HUNTER, MOST HOSPITABLE

The American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute honored Resort Management Professor Terry Hunter as a leader in hospitality training and education. Hunter was the 2013 recipient of the Anthony Marshall Award, which recognizes an individual “who has made significant long-term contributions to the hospitality industry by educating future leaders.” Photo: Ed Kosmicki

CMC committed to reduce its production of greenhouse gases by 12.5 percent. The goal was to be carbon-neutral by 2020.



## MUSIC MENTOR

In 1994, Aspen Campus Dean Dr. Ann Harris and Professor Dr. Tom Buesch launched a community music appreciation series in collaboration with Robert Harth, then CEO of the Aspen Music Festival and School. Later, Buesch taught a college-level music appreciation class, for which the music festival generously provided free performance tickets and a world-class learning experience. Music Festival students also visited campus to perform and answer questions. By 2017, Buesch estimated 1,000 students had taken his class. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

In the late 1990s the District Office was renamed Central Services to more accurately reflect its mission to support the campuses. By 2010, CMC was renting additional office space and needing more. That year college leaders formed a unique partnership with the Glenwood Springs Downtown Development Authority, the Garfield County Library District, the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association, and the city. CMC, the library, and the chamber were all in need of room. As part of this partnership, CMC purchased the former First National Bank building at Eighth and Grand.

CMC consolidated Central Services offices in the building at Eighth and Grand in 2011, a more

energy-efficient and cost-effective location than the previous locations on Ninth Street and on Colorado Avenue. The new space was projected to pay for itself within 14 years through rental income and savings in office leasing, energy, and maintenance costs. College Construction Manager Joe Elliot was charged with the upkeep of the original building and knew well the costs of maintaining it. Though it initially created considerable work for him, he agreed with the move. "There was a lot of scuttle at the time, that here we are buying buildings and we're not investing anything in our employees or anything like that. Well, it's really not that way. In the long run, it was really the right thing to do."

## CMC won a \$2.2 million grant to expand Student Support Services to Edwards and Rifle.

## The Isaacson School for New Media was named after best-selling biographer Walter Isaacson.

The move also helped revitalize downtown. The Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association's visitor center moved from a small office six blocks away to the new Central Services lobby in the center of downtown. The shared visitor welcome center showcased Glenwood Springs as a destination resort and CMC as a destination college, introducing the college to thousands of visitors annually.



Walter Isaacson (center) joined his friend and longtime CMC supporter Jim Calaway (right) and Michael Conniff in Aspen for the dedication of the Isaacson School for New Media. Photo: Ed Kosmicki



The Central Services building at Eighth and Grand, Glenwood Springs. Photo: Doug Stewart

In a three-way deal, the city purchased the adjacent lot across the alley, then conveyed it to the library district in exchange for the library's previous location. The library district and college then built a new two-story building on the lot. The first floor was the new Glenwood Springs Branch Library. Below it, a 65-space underground parking garage provided much-needed downtown parking for CMC employees, and public parking after work hours. The top floor was 13,000 square feet of unfinished space for future development as needed by CMC and the library, connected by a bridge to the original building.

After the Central Services move and with the new construction underway, Jensen stepped down as president in December 2012. That spring he was hired to be president of Henry Ford College in Dearborn, Michigan. While a nationwide search was underway for his replacement, the board of trustees appointed Charles Dassance, a retired community college president from Florida, as interim president.



The college and the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association co-developed a visitor information center, located in the Central Services lobby and staffed by the chamber. Photo: Doug Stewart



## THE VIRTUAL CAMPUS

### Increasing Access

Distance learning became a mainstay of the rural CMC District in the 1980s. It began with "telecourses." Bob McGill, who originally came to the Spring Valley campus to teach photography in 1969, was instrumental in getting telecourses off the ground.

Partnering with Denver's PBS television station, McGill recorded courses to VHS tapes, then sent them out to students for home viewing. Students submitted papers by mail. Instructors would grade the papers and mail them back. McGill was keeping up with about 30 classes and 200 students per term.

While primitive by internet standards, this was a technological breakthrough that increased access to course offerings. Previously, students were limited to what was offered at nearby campuses. Low local enrollments had often caused course cancellations, but now enrollment could be combined across the college.

"What Bob really understood was that distance education could serve as the academic underpinning of arts and science degrees as well as a number of vocational programs so that we could deliver them on a regular basis to the college as a whole," remembered former Academic Services Dean Dr. Steve Rice.

McGill later helped implement the next generation of distance learning, the interactive video system. Instructors led classes from a single location via CMC's video conferencing network, allowing students to participate from several campuses.

McGill retired in 2003. "It's become an extremely viable form of education for people who have difficulty getting to the physical plant to actually study in the classroom," he said in a 2015 interview.

Daryl Yarrow came to CMC in 2001 as division director in distance learning under Bob McGill, when the internet opened a whole new world for distance education.

Most online instructors continued to teach face-to-face classes. "We do have a lot of students who like that connection of knowing that our online courses are affiliated, aligned with what we're doing on the face-to-face campuses," Yarrow said. "Students need the flexibility of online learning in many instances to combine education with their work and family life."

# Olympic CMC



CMC student Taylor Fletcher, 2013 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships, Val di Fiemme, Italy.  
Photo: Sarah Brunson/US Ski Team

Colorado Mountain College doesn't have a football team. But because of its location, the CMC region draws world-class athletes who come to train at altitude. Whether learning while they train or gaining skills that will help them after their competitive days come to an end, athletes through the years have turned to CMC.

CMC is a proud sponsor of Olympic and other daring dreams. Several CMC students and alumni have stood on the Olympic podium. Several more have worked behind the scenes of international competition to make athletes shine, prepare the venue, or produce media coverage. A 2010 Wall Street Journal story ranked the top Olympian-producing colleges in the United States. CMC and three other schools, including Harvard, tied for 17th place, producing five Winter Olympians each that year.



**“CMC was the perfect place for me. I remember getting up early to ski until noon, then catching the bus straight to campus. I literally walked into the classroom with my ski boots still on...”**

– Josh Loubek, 2014 Sochi Olympic Games Chief Snowboard Freestyle Judge



**AARON BRASSARD**  
ISAACSON SCHOOL FOR NEW MEDIA  
Worked as an LED screen tech in the Rio de Janeiro Summer Games.



**MARTY CARRIGAN**  
CMC STEAMBOAT SPRINGS  
Supported Hart-sponsored freestyle skiers at the Calgary, Albertville and Lillehammer Games and was commentator for CBS TV.



**KENNY NAULT**  
CMC STEAMBOAT SPRINGS  
Personal tech for Shaun White and Kelly Clark at Vancouver. Supported US and Canadian snowboarders at Sochi and Pyeongchang.



## THE MARRINERS

*Prepped for Olympics*

Allison and Geoff “Salty” Marriner, both alumni of the CMC ski area operations program, gained valuable experience and solid reputations in on-mountain operations and World Cup ski racing production at Vail Resorts.

The two, who met while students at CMC Leadville and later married, were then hired to help produce the XXIII Winter Olympics and the XII Paralympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Geoff was tapped to prepare the Jeongseon Alpine Centre, the venue for the Alpine skiing speed events. As the mountain operations manager, he helped design the downhill and super-G courses. “In Korea, I’ve definitely been taken completely out of my comfort zone in all aspects of life,” Geoff said.

While Geoff developed the mountain for racing, Allison split her time between training South Korean staff in snow cat grooming techniques and working at Beaver Creek Resort. Operating ski area machinery as a female caused some ripples in the culture, according to Allison. “One day while grooming through the finish area, there was a group of Korean women. Every time I came by I got a thumbs-up and smiles and cheers.”

## 3 CHRIS KLUG

CMC ASPEN | Snowboard Slalom 1998, 2002, 2010

Earned a bronze medal in snowboard slalom in the Salt Lake City Games, just 18 months after receiving a life-saving liver transplant. He was the first transplant recipient to win an Olympic medal.



Photo: Bruce Snowden

## 2 GRETCHEN BLEILER

CMC ASPEN | Snowboard halfpipe 2006, 2010

Won silver in snowboard halfpipe in the Torino Games.



Photo: Oliver Kaus

## MASON FINLEY

CMC BUENA VISTA | Discus 2016

Was a dual enrollment student while attending Buena Vista High School. He later won the US Olympic Trials in discus and competed in the Rio de Janeiro Summer Games.



Photo: US Track and Field

## JOHNNY SPILLANE

CMC STEAMBOAT SPRINGS | Nordic Combined 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010

Grew up in Steamboat Springs near Howelson Hill and started jumping at age 11. In the Vancouver Games he earned three silvers, the first-ever US medals in Nordic combined.



Photo: Spillane, C. Prud'homme

## BILL DEMONG

CMC STEAMBOAT SPRINGS | Nordic Combined 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014

The first American to win an Olympic gold medal in a nordic event. He was selected to be the flag bearer for Team USA at the Vancouver Games closing ceremony.



Photo: US Ski Team

## CMC STUDENTS WHO COMPETED IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES:

BOBBY ALDIGHERI | SBT Freestyle skiing

JIM “MOOSE” BARROWS | SBT Alpine skiing

ANNE BATTELLE | SBT Freestyle skiing

SCOTT BERRY | SBT Ski jumping

JOHN CALLAHAN | ASP Cross-country skiing

GARY CRAWFORD | SBT Nordic combined

MATT DAYTON | SBT Nordic combined

CHRIS DEL BOSCO | VVE Freestyle skiing

ANNALISA DREW | VVE Freestyle skiing

SHANNON DUNN | SBT Snowboard

DICK DURRANCE | ASP Alpine skiing

CHAD FLEISCHER | SBT Alpine skiing

BRYAN FLETCHER | SBT Nordic combined

TAYLOR FLETCHER | SBT Nordic combined

PEGGY FRAIR | LDV Luge

JEANNE GOLAY | GWS Cycling road, track

ARIELLE GOLD | SBT Snowboard

TAYLOR GOLD | SBT Snowboard

SACHA GROS | SBT Alpine skiing

MATT GROSSJEAN | SBT Alpine skiing

SIMI HAMILTON | ASP Cross-country skiing

CORKY HEID | SBT Ski jumping

RAY HEID | SBT Ski jumping

BARBARA FERRIES HENDERSON | BRK Alpine skiing

JED HINKLEY | SBT Nordic combined

NOAH HOFFMAN | ASP Cross-country skiing

DAVE JARRETT | SBT Nordic combined

CLINT JONES | SBT Ski jumping

HEIDI KLOSER | VVE Freestyle skiing

CAROLINE LALIVE | SBT Alpine skiing

ANDY LEROY | SBT Alpine skiing

BETH MADSEN | ASP Alpine skiing

MAX MAROLT | ASP Alpine skiing

TRAVIS MAYER | SBT Freestyle skiing

CHRIS MCNEIL | SBT Ski jumping

RICK MEWBORN | SBT Ski jumping

ANDY MILL | GWS Alpine skiing

JACK MILLER | SBT Alpine skiing

KATIE MONAHAN | ASP Alpine skiing

MIKE MORSE | SBT Freestyle skiing

TERRY MORSE | ASP Alpine skiing

ELIZA OUTTRIM | SBT Freestyle skiing

MONIQUE PELLETIER | ASP Alpine skiing

JUSTIN REITER | SBT Snowboard

SARAH SCHLEPER | VVE Alpine skiing

TOMMY SCHWALL | SBT Ski jumping

ERIN SIMMONS | SBT Snowboard

JASON SMITH | SBT Snowboard

TIM TETREAULT | SBT Nordic combined

CRAIG THRASHER | SBT Alpine skiing

KATIE UHLAENDER | BRK Skeleton

LINAS VAITKUS | SBT Alpine skiing

CRAIG WARD | ASP Cross-country skiing

GRAHAM WATANABE | SBT Snowboard

LORIS WERNER | SBT Alpine skiing, ski jumping

TODD WILSON | SBT Nordic combined

GORDY WREN | SBT Nordic combined, ski jumping, cross-country skiing

JAKE ZAMANSKY | ASP Alpine skiing

“Any great community needs a great center of education and job training.”

– Walter Isaacson



# Increasing Stature



Public confidence in the college and its graduates had been steadily increasing. In 2012, CNN/Money ranked Colorado Mountain College 17th nationally for graduation plus transfer rates among community colleges. The college also ranked first in Colorado for this important student success measurement. The rating was “based on the percentage of students that graduated within three years or transferred to four-year colleges,” according to CNN/Money. The report, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, placed Colorado Mountain College in the top 2 percent of community colleges in the United States.

Increased private support followed these achievements. At

the urging of philanthropist and long-time CMC champion Jim Calaway, the college established the CMC Board of Overseers. This non-governing group of volunteer advisers brought insights from their roles as regional and national leaders. The purpose of the board, according to the vision statement, was “to provide high-level strategic guidance to the president of Colorado Mountain College.”

Benefactors, both outside of and within the college helped carry on CMC’s mission to provide high-quality, affordable, accessible higher education for students. Private financial support continued to rise. Since its establishment in 1985, the

# TOP 20 IN U.S. FOR STUDENT SUCCESS —CNN Money

Colorado Mountain College Foundation had raised and managed \$38 million for buildings, academic programs, and student scholarships.

For 20 years, the Alpine Bank Latino/Hispanic Scholarship program had promoted diversity within CMC and given Latino and Hispanic high school graduates a path to a college education. Early on, Alpine Bank founder and CEO Bob Young had seen the potential for this kind of support to enrich the communities of the region. Of the scholarship recipients, Young said, “They became great mentors to younger Latinos. They make excellent emissaries for the program, and it doesn’t matter if they come back to work for us or just become responsible community members. We all benefit. They have set the bar higher for their families with their academic success.”

**The report placed Colorado Mountain College in the top 2 percent of community colleges in the United States.**



Chevron engineer Corrie Harris and eighth-grade science teacher Scott Sandblom at the Colorado River as part of a \$150,000 Chevron grant to provide science training for public school teachers in western Garfield County. Photo: David Clifford

In 2012, Chevron provided a \$150,000 grant for intensive science training at CMC Rifle for elementary and middle school teachers from New Castle to Parachute. Two dozen teachers learned to integrate hands-on activities into lesson plans to make science fun for their students. The grant covered the cost of the workshop, a stipend, classroom equipment, and the cost of a substitute teacher for their classes.

In Summit County, the CMC Foundation launched a scholarship campaign during the 2012-13 academic year, exceeding its \$1 million goal and creating 36 new scholarships.

To grow the Isaacson School for New Media, Aspen residents John and Jessica Fullerton pledged a lead gift. The gift established Fullerton Family Scholarships to attract talented out-of-state students and allowed the Isaacson School to gear up with the latest in digital production technology. The Fullertons later followed that gift with a \$1 million pledge to help further develop the Isaacson School.



Brown University journalism graduate Justin Patrick received a Fullerton Family Scholarship, allowing him to further his studies at the Isaacson School for New Media. He later became communications director for Wilderness Workshop in Carbondale. Photo: Kate Lapidis



## FROM CMC TO SUPER BOWL

Nate Solder, a former CMC dual enrollment student from Buena Vista High School, transferred his CMC courses to the University of Colorado, opening more time to develop his football talents. He was the first-round selection of the New England Patriots in 2011, and played on the winning Patriots team in the 2015 and 2017 Super Bowls. Photo courtesy of New England Patriots/David Silverman



Every graduating high school senior in the Colorado Mountain College district received a \$1,000 President’s Scholarship to begin their college education.

Across the mountains, Vail Resorts and Copper Mountain created new scholarships designed for students pursuing careers in ski area management, hospitality, and sustainability. Vail Resorts, in line with its mission to support environmental and educational initiatives, established the Echo Sustainability Studies Scholarship for students enrolled in CMC’s sustainability studies programs in Dillon, Breckenridge, and Edwards.

**We aspire to be the most inclusive and innovative student-centered college in the nation, elevating the economic, social, cultural, and environmental vitality of our beautiful Rocky Mountain communities.**  
— Colorado Mountain College Vision Statement

## RENEWED VISION

In November 2013, the board of trustees appointed Dr. Carrie Besnette Hauser the college’s ninth president. Firmly planting her feet on the college’s heritage, she started by meeting with CMC founding father David Delaplane and others to hear the story of how CMC came to occupy such a unique

position in higher education. “I only had interest in being president at one institution,” she said. “And that was Colorado Mountain College.”

Hauser brought diverse experience as an educator, administrator, and foundation executive. She had been vice president and original senior officer of the Daniels Fund, where she had helped develop the Daniels Scholarship Program to help underserved students gain college access and success. She was well-

connected at high levels in the state, having served as a governor’s appointee to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and the Colorado Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Reform. She had also been vice president for advancement and external relations at Metropolitan State University of Denver and the executive director of its foundation.



## SALING TO HARVARD

Saling Simon graduated from Harvard University after getting his start at CMC. The psychology major credited CMC’s small class sizes and approachable instructors with jump-starting his interest in higher education.



Photo: Carrie Click

## JOEL GOMEZ

*Mexico to School of Mines, via CMC*

At the age of 14, Joel Gomez left his family in Chihuahua, Mexico, and came to Summit County to live with an uncle. His goals were to leave the violence behind, go to college, and become an engineer. To complete an associate degree at CMC, he had to first learn English, graduate from high school, support himself working part-time jobs, and figure out how to balance his myriad responsibilities.

When interviewed in 2017, Gomez, then 20, was entering Colorado School of Mines to study engineering while still supporting himself.

“The key part of being able to balance between work and school is up to the student,” Gomez said. “Sometimes students don’t get themselves organized, and I’ve learned that over the past years.” He arrived at that balance more easily at CMC, he believes, thanks to a small campus where his instructors and the campus dean could offer personal guidance.

He had a head start at Mines thanks to two other CMC advantages: affordable tuition that allowed him to complete two years without debt, and CMC’s longstanding academic transfer agreement that allowed Gomez to apply most of his CMC credits toward his degree at Mines.

Gomez was drawn to study mechanical engineering so he could help people use energy more efficiently. “I want to work in energy resources and energy management,” he said. “I feel like we’re not coordinating all the energy flow and making the most out of what we have. I think we do a lot of things wastefully.”

For Gomez, having a clear goal meant he had already surmounted one of life’s big obstacles. “It’s easy to say, but the hardest thing is to find something that you’re passionate about,” he said. “After that, things will come, I believe, a little bit easier, because you know what you want to do, what you love. It is just a matter of doing what needs to be done.”



## RACHEL WEISS

*From CMC to Cambridge University*

Rachel Weiss was a top student at Battle Mountain High School in Edwards, but she knew she could only achieve her next goal—attending Cambridge University in England—by also earning an associate degree. British colleges run on a different model and don't usually accept students straight out of high school. And with just a few dozen American students admitted each year to the prestigious academy, Weiss needed every advantage she could muster.

Weiss turned to CMC's concurrent enrollment classes to earn an associate degree while still completing high school at Battle Mountain, across the street from CMC Vail Valley in Edwards. CMC classes were offered online, so she could fit them into her busy high school schedule. She graduated from high school and CMC in 2015 with a 4.0 college GPA.

As of 2017 she was enrolled in a three-year program in psychology and behavioral science at Christ's College, one of 31 colleges that form Cambridge University. The course of study included weekly meetings with an adviser, with grades based on a single test for each class, taken at the end of the school year. "It's a lot of stress," Weiss said.

"[The CMC online classes] got me in the habit of making my own schedule and sticking to a deadline," she said. "It was good preparation for Cambridge, which is independent-study-based." Weiss also said her CMC composition class prepared her especially well for the essay writing required at Cambridge.

Turning to a dramatic interest, Weiss found she could balance the academic pressure with comic acting. After spending a few summers during high school studying comedy and improvisation at Northwestern University and at the famed Second City comedy club in Chicago, she was eager to jump into the theater scene at Cambridge. She became president of the Cambridge Impronauts, a comedy troupe of students and local comics who perform unscripted, unrehearsed shows based on suggestions from the audience.

Beyond graduation, Weiss looked to a new set of goals: earning a master's degree, becoming a psychology professor, and continuing in theater.

In step with the outdoor culture of the region, Hauser came to CMC with leadership skills honed as a river guide in Grand Canyon National Park and during mountain treks on several continents.

As Hauser took office, she worked with the trustees to complete a new strategic plan, which gave direction for the next five years. Together they authored a renewed vision statement that honored the past while looking toward a desired future:

"We aspire to be the most inclusive and innovative student-centered college in the nation, elevating the economic, social, cultural, and environmental vitality of our beautiful Rocky Mountain communities."

Hauser's team mobilized toward this vision, creating the Mountain Futures Fund. CMC quickly secured nearly \$1 million in funding from multiple sources to help local high school students obtain a college education. In addition to its own contribution, CMC secured grants from the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative, El Pomar Foundation, the Morgridge Family Foundation, the state department of education, and a federal Title II grant from the Colorado Department of Higher Education.

CMC's 2015-16 Annual Review highlighted the need with national data: by 2020 three-quarters of jobs were expected to require a post secondary certificate or degree. In addition, 50 to 70 percent of all students who entered CMC were not ready for college-level work. The Mountain Futures

**"We need to work together with whatever partners we can, to help our local students be ready for the future."  
-Dr. Carrie Besnette Hauser**

Fund targeted the education gap and also aimed to eliminate the need for remediation for local high school graduates.

One of the first initiatives of the fund was the President's Scholarship. Hauser sent a personalized letter to every senior graduating from 25 high schools in the college district and service area,



## CONCURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

To strengthen partnerships with local high schools, CMC invited superintendents, principals and counselors to Glenwood Springs for a one day Concurrent Enrollment Conference in 2017. Chief Operating Officer Dr. Matt Gianneschi (left) led the conference which highlighted the expanding opportunities for high school students who enrolled in college courses. Gianneschi had helped author Colorado's concurrent enrollment legislation in 2009 when he was senior adviser for education to Governor Bill Ritter.

offering them a \$1,000 scholarship and instant admission to CMC. "We need to work together with whatever partners we can, to help our local students be ready for the future," Hauser said.

Mountain Futures not only created a better pathway for local graduating seniors, but also threw open the door for students still in high school and those from under-represented populations. By fall

2017, concurrent enrollments of local high school students in CMC classes had risen 31 percent in three years. The effort was boosted by Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff Dr. Matt Gianneschi, who had helped author Colorado's concurrent enrollment legislation in 2009 when he was senior adviser for education to Governor Bill Ritter. Overall Hispanic

enrollments during the same time grew by 28 percent, with the completion rate for those students jumping 46 percent. Yet CMC leadership pressed for even more audacious goals: all students would leave local high schools ready for college, and as many as possible would have a college degree or certification by their high school graduation.

## AIMING STILL HIGHER

Students who came to CMC continued to find a high-quality education with the lowest tuition in the state. CMC's bachelor's degrees were listed by the US Department of Education as the third most affordable in the country. Meanwhile, the prestigious Aspen Institute listed CMC among the top 150 colleges nationally to be considered for the Aspen Prize. This distinction once again showed CMC shining in the areas of student retention and completion, highlighting the college's overall performance, improvement, and equity for under-represented students.

Doubling down on this, college leadership continued to work toward improving the educational experience for students by putting more resources into the classroom. By implementing new technology and reconfiguring staff duties, CMC "added full-time faculty each year from 2014-17 while reducing administrators and administrative expenses," Hauser reported to the trustees.

To increase the quality and consistency of the instruction delivered at multiple sites, across 12,000 square miles, CMC formed the Academic Affairs Design Team

(AADT) in 2015. Early on, the AADT recognized that a new structure was needed. In addition to locally responsive programming, each academic discipline would benefit greatly from collegewide leadership. It was a big challenge for a college that had grown primarily by responding to local needs. But leaders from across the college district agreed that the promise of greater coherence and consistency for CMC students at all locations was worth the effort. The academic affairs redesign designated seven schools, with dean oversight for each, to be implemented in the 2017-18 school year:

- ▶ **School of Business**
- ▶ **School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)**
- ▶ **School of Nursing, Health Sciences, and Public Safety**
- ▶ **School of Humanities and Social Sciences**
- ▶ **School of Tourism, Hospitality, and Recreation**
- ▶ **Isaacson School of Communication, Art, and Media**
- ▶ **School of Transitional Education (GED, ESL, Developmental Education, and career programs)**

The college also created an academic support division to bolster student success and completion, and coordinate community education.

The blueprint for change was the Master Academic Plan, directed by Vice President of Academic Affairs Kathy Kiser-Miller. The new plan, she said, would establish "a strategic vision for academic affairs, providing stable planning, recognized processes based on priorities, effective resource allocation, curriculum review, and quality improvement."

Entrepreneurial as ever, CMC faculty and staff continued to find new ways to respond to changing needs in the community and the region. Career and technical training was in demand, with graduates holding specialized certificates earning more on average than those with two- or even four-year degrees, according to the Colorado Department of Education. Adding to mainstay programs like the Colorado Law Enforcement Training Academy and outdoor recreation leadership, the college developed innovative training in several new areas.

In partnership with SnowSports Industries America, Mike Martin, ski and snowboard business professor, designed the country's first industry-wide certification and the first national testing center for the snowsports industry at CMC Steamboat



*A major reorganization of the academic affairs division aimed to provide more consistent and higher-quality academic offerings across the college to increase student success. Photo: Ed Kosmicki*

## ASPEN PRIZE

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program named Colorado Mountain College as one of the nation's top 150 community colleges. The Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence honors institutions that strive for and achieve exceptional levels of success for all students, while they are in college and after they graduate.



**LONGEVITY AND LOYALTY**  
 CMC has long been known as a great place to work. When people join the team, they tend to stay. Professor of English Communications Dr. Joyce Mosher (right) started teaching French part-time in 1975, and still enjoyed teaching full-time in Summit County 42 years later. Ruth Kirschbaum (left) was first hired in 1968 to teach German at West Campus. Over the years, she held several other positions, and was still tutoring Basic English students in 2017 at CMC Glenwood Springs, well into her 90s.



Springs. It enabled CMC students and working professionals to earn nationally recognized certification from SnowSports Industries America (SIA), the trade group representing US ski and snowboard manufacturers. Martin and fellow faculty member Tim Widmer followed that launch by planning a groundbreaking certificate and degree for the action sports industry. The two, who had once been roommates as students at CMC, were now at the forefront of outdoor sports education.

In Leadville, the CMC team saw opportunities for training in avalanche forecasting due to the increasing popularity of backcountry snowsports. Uniquely blending distance learning and fieldwork, the avalanche science program was co-developed and endorsed by such industry leaders as US Forest Service researcher Dr. Kelly Elder. “The Colorado Mountain College program fills a niche in North American avalanche education,” said Elder, calling it “a significant departure from any other model.” A partnership with the Colorado Avalanche Information Center brought a sophisticated weather station and other resources to campus.

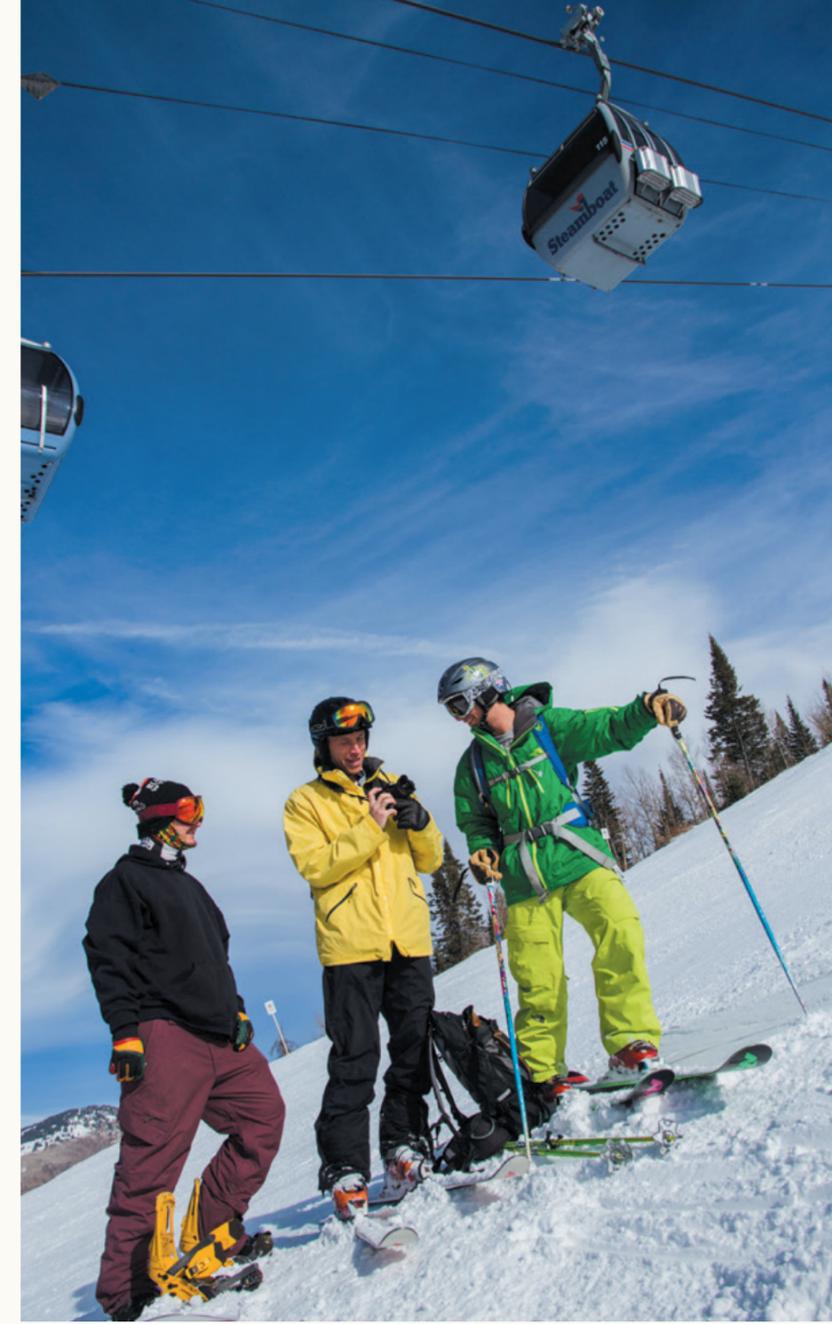
With career training in mind, CMC staff added new bachelor’s degrees. Nursing students could now continue on for their Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN). “We’re one of the leaders in the country,” said Director Dr. Betty Bembenek, noting that in 2017, CMC was the first community college in Colorado to award BSN degrees, joining only seven other states with similar programs.

Responding to feedback from local school districts that were challenged by yearly teacher turnover, Dr. Barbara K.V. Johnson designed an innovative bachelor’s degree in elementary education that launched in 2015. It included four years of in-classroom experience and embedded culturally and linguistically diverse education.

That year, a new Bachelor of Applied Science rounded out the five bachelor’s degrees that had been approved by the state in 2011. This degree added management and leadership skills to all two-year career and technical Associate of Applied Science degrees, giving students a management track, and effectively giving CMC many new majors.



Brenda Hollon (left) honed her search skills with Instructor Blase Reardon (center) and Program Director Roger Coit. Hollon was among the first students enrolled in CMC Leadville’s avalanche science program that combined online and hands-on instruction for students across the country. Photo: Lauren Swanson



Ski and Snowboard Business Professor Mike Martin (center) brought media production into the program and led the effort to establish the first national testing center in partnership with SnowSports Industries America. Photo: Corey Kopischke



Nursing students worked toward their bachelor’s degree in Breckenridge. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

**CMC was the first community college in Colorado to award BSN degrees, joining only seven other states with similar programs.**



A bachelor’s degree in elementary education embedded culturally and linguistically diverse education. Photo: Ed Kosmicki



Internships at the Winter X Games in Aspen arranged by instructor Corby Anderson (center) introduced new media students like Ned Montgomery (left) and Patrick Badallian (right) to the big time.

As community partnerships matured, more experiential learning opportunities became available for students. Isaacson School students parlayed their internships at the Winter X Games in Aspen and similar events into media work around the world, from Los Angeles to the Olympics in Brazil. During the summer they reported on the Aspen Ideas Festival, meeting global thought leaders from business, government, and the nonprofit sector.

The White River National Forest surrounding CMC was one of the most popular forests in the United States, creating management challenges, especially as older staff approached retirement. The US Forest Service hoped to cultivate a new generation of leaders from diverse backgrounds, so it approached CMC to host an internship program in natural resource and recreation management. The program, a pilot for the nation, included a two-year paid internship in which students could gain hands-on experience in sustainable land management through part-time employment with the US Forest Service. Graduates were given a competitive advantage for Forest Service employment.

During this time, college operations also strengthened. In early 2017, contrasting with the tenuous funding of the early days, CMC received a Moody’s AA3 Rating when it refinanced its debt to help pay for capital projects. In assigning the high mark, Moody’s commented on the strength of recent planning and budgeting choices by college leadership.



**KATHRYN HOWLIN**  
*Neuroscience Researcher*

Kathryn Howlin intended to spend one “gap” year after high school skiing in Aspen. Then she discovered her passion for science at CMC Aspen, which led her to New York City, attending an Ivy League school, then working as a neurosciences consultant.

While Howlin was working for the Aspen Skiing Co. as a ski instructor, she volunteered with Challenge Aspen to ski with disabled children and veterans. “That really psyched my interest and gave me the drive to do something in that field,” she said.

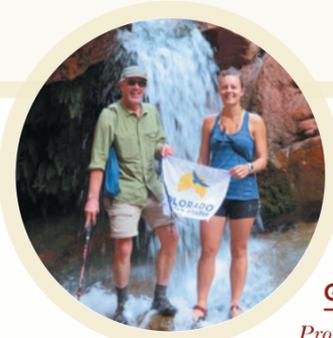
She enrolled at CMC Aspen, taking humanities and science classes. Although she’d always found school a challenge, CMC’s supportive environment fostered in her a love of learning and fueled her desire to excel.

In particular, Howlin credits Dr. Tom Buesch, professor of communications and humanities. “I grew up hating reading. He completely changed that. I was interested in literature for the first time in my life,” she recalled. Buesch and other instructors took time to help her prepare for exams, and she thrived in CMC’s nourishing environment.

From CMC, Howlin was accepted into Columbia University in New York City, an Ivy League school with the country’s No. 2 ranked neuroscience program.

Neuroscience is a study of the brain and its impact on behavior, thinking, and the nervous system. As a research and solutions consultant with the NeuroLeadership Institute, Howlin used her education to research workplace behaviors and help companies learn how to build more diversity in their workforce.

Howlin credits the caring faculty at CMC Aspen with putting her on the road to a successful career. “I still, to this day, stand by the fact that the quality of the education I received at Colorado Mountain College was so much greater than at Columbia,” she said. “They [CMC] saw a potential in me that I had never realized.”



### GARRY ZABEL

*Professor for the Eons*

Veteran professor Garry Zabel believes in the motto, “seeing, touching, and experiencing is believing.” That’s why he led over 250 CMC field geology trips. “On a field trip,” he explained, “you get so much more than you can out of a textbook.”

Few places offer better opportunities to study geology than the CMC District. The nearby canyons, arches, and sand dunes are an unparalleled geological laboratory where students can reach out and touch rocks that are 1.7 billion years old. Zabel is energized by it all, gesturing enthusiastically to twisted strata and sprinkling eons of dusty puns throughout his lectures.

After 29 years of full-time teaching, Zabel retired as one of only two faculty who earned the distinction of professor emeritus. Yet he just can’t quit taking students into the field, continuing as an adjunct professor to lead a sold out Grand Canyon trip every year.

This crown jewel of the geology field trip circuit immerses students in a five-day, 22-mile rim-to-rim backpack of the canyon. With every step, students descend through layers of geologic time—seeing, touching, and experiencing. “There’s no other place so representative of Earth’s history,” Zabel says.

The trip’s participants have ranged in age from teen to octogenarian. Some take the course for credit, others want the thrill of completing the rim-to-rim hike, some just want to learn more about the natural world, and some are inspired to become geologists. As for the hike, he says, “A lot of emotions come up, ranging from excitement to ‘It’s too big, I can’t do this!’” Each group has supported each other along the way, becoming like a family, and celebrating the big accomplishment upon reaching the rim at the other side.

“We are so lucky to live in this place,” Zabel says. “The whole CMC District is located in such amazing geology.”



### THE HEART OF SUSTAINABILITY

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education honored CMC Steamboat Springs Associate Professor Dr. Tina Evans for her article, “Finding Heart: Generating and Maintaining Hope and Agency Through Sustainability Education,” which appeared in *The Journal of Sustainability Education*. Evans received AASHE’s 2016 Campus Sustainability Research award for outstanding achievements and progress toward sustainability. The prestigious award is bestowed on institutions and individuals that are leading sustainability in higher education.

By 2017, the average net cost to students had decreased in each of the previous three years due to several targeted strategies. In an age of onerous student debt, according to the Colorado Department of Education, CMC graduates had the lowest student debt load in Colorado.



Also in 2017, Colorado Mountain College was recognized with a US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Postsecondary Sustainability Award. Nominated by the Colorado Department of Higher Education, CMC was one of only nine postsecondary institutions in the United States, and the only institution in Colorado, to receive the distinction which recognized advancement in environmental impact, health, and education at schools across the nation.

As if to underscore the college’s new standing, maturity, and direction, the Colorado legislature voted on April 21, 2016 to remove the “junior college” designation from the institution. Colorado Mountain College officially became a two- and four-year degree-granting local district college.

### The US Forest Service hoped to cultivate a new generation of leaders from diverse backgrounds, so it approached CMC.



CMC and the US Forest Service collaborated on an internship program to develop students as new forest leaders while they completed their bachelor’s degrees.

### do something MAJOR

Heading into the 50th anniversary year, CMC refreshed its brand with a new logo and messaging that highlighted its distinctive value for students: low-debt degrees, quality instruction, community connections and inclusive student body. A new slogan resulting from enthusiastic student feedback told prospective students that this was a place where they could “Do Something Major.”

“CMC is special,” Hauser wrote in her 2016-17 report to the trustees, “and continues to prove that institutions like ours can (and should) be models of innovation, access, and success.”

### SINCE 1967. BECAUSE OF YOU.

Colorado Mountain College hit its 50th Anniversary in full stride. In each community, events leading up to the 50th year celebrated the symbiotic relationships that had developed between the college and its mountain towns. Alumni, students, local residents,



50th Anniversary logo, designed by former CMC student John Jensen.

COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE



### 50K FOR 50th

Answering a challenge from Professional Photography Professor Derek Johnston, President Hauser embarked on a summer-long goal in 2016 to climb 50,000 vertical feet to recognize the college’s 50th anniversary. Also in a quest to summit all of Colorado’s 14,000-foot peaks, she climbed Maroon Peak with Johnston (right), Associate Professor of Outdoor Education and Sustainability Studies Johann Aberger (left), as well as Colorado Mountain Club Executive Director Scott Robson, who took the summit photo.

and former employees came together to marvel at the exponential changes in the region and the college since the founders had driven rural, two-lane highways to sell their bold idea using living room slide shows. “Because of You” was the theme chosen to honor the grassroots support of taxpayers, private donors, and everyday citizens who made Colorado Mountain College and its mountain communities flourish.

It was a year of reunion and recommitment as some of the college’s pioneers gathered with current employees and supporters to consider what had been accomplished and the promising things ahead. Public Information Officer Debbie Crawford and her department gave newspapers and other media plenty of ways to tell the CMC story throughout the celebration year. Alumni and others posted stories on the 50th anniversary website about how the CMC experience had changed their lives.



Leadville’s Marauding Marmot mascot.

the CMC experience had changed their lives.

On March 23, 2017, CMC leadership gathered at the state capitol as the Colorado house and senate passed a joint resolution: “That the Colorado General Assembly congratulates Colorado Mountain College on its 50 years of service and education to the state of Colorado and recognizes the notable achievements and contributions of the College and its graduates.” That evening, CMC trustees, senior staff, friends, and supporters joined Governor Hickenlooper at the Governor’s Residence to celebrate the college’s impact on the state and region. Hickenlooper read his

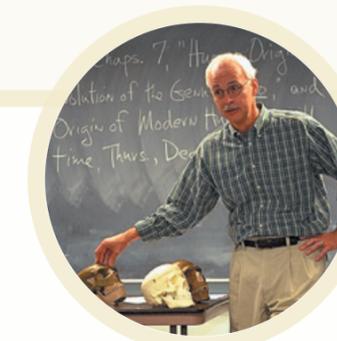
proclamation: that October 2, the first day classes were held at CMC, would “forever after” be “Colorado Mountain College Day” in the state of Colorado.

As the anniversary unfolded, recently hired Vice President for Advancement and Foundation CEO Kristin Heath Colon noticed that the college didn’t have an official mascot. As a former staffer for the CU athletic department, she couldn’t comprehend this—every college should have a mascot.

Most campuses had casually referred to the eagle from the CMC logo as the mascot. Spring Valley had used the eagle for their intercollegiate soccer teams in 2007, and the CMC Ski Team in Steamboat Springs had also informally adopted the eagle as their rallying symbol. In 1993, CMC Leadville had been



“Swoop,” CMC’s new mascot, appeared at regional events including Leadville’s Boom Days, bringing smiles to spectators such as Campus Vice-President Rachel Pokrandt. Photo: Lauren Swanson



### GEORGE BAGWELL

*Leading for Decades*

George Bagwell saw it all during his four decades at CMC. Back in the day—1974—he wore a tie to work. President Elbie Gann’s wife, Wilma, entertained faculty wives at afternoon teas. CMC life was old-fashioned then, recalled Bagwell in a 2015 interview. He taught anthropology and psychology at East Campus in Leadville. Every Thursday night he drove to Chaffee County to teach a class. After three years, he was promoted to division director in charge of academic instruction.

Then, in 1981, Steamboat Springs joined the CMC District. Bagwell was tapped by President Dean Lillie to head up the campus. “It was a big deal, especially for the people here ... There were great expectations. Dean Lillie told me to ‘bring the campus into the fold,’ is the way he put it. I’ll never forget it,” Bagwell said.

Connecting the campuses meant getting on board with computers.

Bagwell oversaw the conversion from paper to computerized registration on campus, and installed a computer lab. In 1984, Apple had rolled out the revolutionary Macs, the first mass market computers with a graphical user interface and a mouse. “CMC Steamboat Springs,” Bagwell said, “had the first Macintosh computer lab at CMC.”

He later got a call from Interim President Armen Sarafian, who wanted him to spearhead a new delivery system for the college, courses offered via television. Bagwell coordinated telecourses with PBS in Denver and rolled them out at Steamboat Springs. The telecourses could combine two or three people at a particular campus with a handful of students at several other campuses so “those students could get the course they wanted and we’d have enough students to justify running the course. Distance education was particularly good for rural areas. It was a big step for higher education across the country,” he said.

Bagwell also returned to the traditional classroom, where he was a respected mentor, teaching the same subjects that first brought him to CMC until he retired in 2014. “I carried the keys to Colorado Mountain College full-time in my pocket for 39 years.”



## TOUR DE CMC

During CMC's 50th anniversary year, Jim Pokrandt and Adam Olson joined a group of staff, faculty, and friends of CMC who rode from one Colorado Mountain College campus to the next. The Tour de CMC traveled to six of the college's 11 locations over the course of five days, covering 260 miles within the college's district and service area. Photo: Jennifer Meves



With a lead gift from the Morgridge Family Foundation, external funders contributed \$2.2 million to finish the upper floor Morgridge Commons community meeting space adjacent to the CMC Central Services Office, which opened in fall 2017. Photo: Hannah Klausman

asked by another college about their football team and mascot, so interim Assistant Dean for Student Services Skip Lee made up the "Marauding Marmot" to represent the non-existent team. But for 50 years, CMC had not selected a collegewide mascot to rally around. So, as 2017 began, the college officially embraced the eagle and held a naming contest. "Swoop" became the college's feathery ambassador, and the costumed character immediately began generating smiles at public events and parades.

During the 50th anniversary year, the Morgridge Family Foundation once again presented the college with a transformative gift, this time contributing \$1.25 million toward completing the unfinished community space connected to the CMC Central Services Office.

The Morgridge gift leveraged grants from the Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District, the Boettcher Foundation, and the Gates Family Foundation. Morgridge Commons opened for community use in 2017. A flexible, state-of-the-art venue for educational, nonprofit, and community collaboration, it also became the new home of the CMC ArtShare gallery in downtown Glenwood Springs.

Financial support for students also increased. Two former CMC faculty gave \$125,000 to launch the Jeschofnig Family Science Scholarship Endowment for CMC students pursuing a degree in science. CMC Professor Emeritus Dr. Peter Jeschofnig taught sciences and anthropology for over 20 years at Leadville and Spring Valley. Linda Jeschofnig, his wife, taught accounting, economics, and business for 17 years as an adjunct faculty member. Together they founded Hands-On Labs, developing micro-scale chemistry laboratory kits that enabled distance education students nationwide to perform campus-equivalent experiments.

As the college turned 50, the CMC Foundation had granted nearly \$40 million in student scholarships. According to Colon, endowments for the college exceeded \$12.5 million, including \$10.4 million for scholarships. "All gifts matter and make a difference. Whether someone gives one dollar or a million dollars, when all gifts are pooled together—the collective whole—that's where you really see exponential impact," Colon said. "No matter how great or modest, every gift is meaningful and makes a difference for our students and our programs. And as affordable as CMC is, your impact as a donor goes even further."



Renowned landscape photographer John Fielder addressed CMC Summit County graduates at the 50th anniversary commencement. Photo: Dominique Taylor



## RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION

On March 23, 2017, the Colorado State House and Senate passed a joint resolution honoring 50 years of CMC. It was announced that evening at a Governor's Residence reception for CMC supporters and staff. Governor John Hickenlooper presented David Delaplaine with a state flag which had flown over the capitol, and he proclaimed October 2, 2017 (50 years after the first day of classes) to be Colorado Mountain College Day in Colorado.

**"Any great community needs a great center of education and job training, and that's why I've been very supportive of Colorado Mountain College."**  
— Walter Isaacson



Walter Isaacson reviewed the portfolios of Shannon Outing and other Isaacson School students when he visited Spring Valley Campus as the commencement speaker in May 2017. Outing's work later received an Award of Excellence in the international College Photographer of the Year contest. Photo: Derek Johnston



Joe Garcia, internationally-acclaimed blind adventurer Erik Weihenmayer, philanthropist Carrie Morgridge, renowned photographer John Fielder, philanthropist Jim Calaway, and Aspen Institute CEO and best-selling biographer Walter Isaacson.

As he was leaving his position as president and CEO of the Aspen Institute in the summer of 2017, Isaacson was asked by *The Aspen Times* managing editor Rick Carroll, "Is there a particular subject [about Aspen] that captures your interest?"

"I do believe strongly that what Aspen needs is expanded presence of Colorado Mountain College," Isaacson replied, "because any great community needs a great

center of education and job training, and that's why I've been very supportive of Colorado Mountain College. Having a steady stream of young, eager people with different interests can help create an innovative, entrepreneurial economy in the whole area—not just Aspen, but the valley. I think that would be the next big thing I would hope for Aspen."

The same could be said for the entire 12,000-square-mile service area. As Colorado Mountain College entered its next 50 years, it was uniquely positioned among institutions of higher education. Local funding created enviable financial stability and kept tuition low. True to the vision of its founders, the doors of opportunity were open wider than ever for anyone with a desire to learn, no matter how humble or lofty their goal.

The college that had scrambled to open two campuses in 1967 on donated land, had itself been transformed. It continued to provide education for local residents as the organizing committee had proposed. It remained true to its roots to be inclusive, innovative, and student-centered. But it also served many who had come from across the country and around the world, drawn by this distinctive blend of life and learning in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. Over half a million people had come through the doors. The college's aspirations and international influence continued to exceed anything even its visionary founders could have imagined.

It began in the early 1960s, with one man and a file folder. And when that man, David Delaplaine, returned to visit Colorado Mountain College campuses for 50th anniversary celebrations, he couldn't stop marveling:

"It's just unbelievable."



As CMC Rifle student Leidy Ruiz received her bachelor's degree, she joined hundreds of other triumphant graduates across the college celebrating the 50th anniversary commencement, and tens of thousands since the college began in 1967. Photo: Ed Kosmicki

# 50 Years of CMC



(L-R) David Delaplane, Marianne Quigley Ackerman and Jim Nieslanik mended fences at Spring Valley's 2016 CMC Day. Photo: Charles Engelbert



Future students helped President Hauser cut the cake at Vail Valley at Edwards. Photo: Charles Engelbert.



Governor John Hickenlooper with his honorary degree, Rifle.



Former Governor Bill Ritter at commencement, Steamboat Springs. Photo: Charles Engelbert



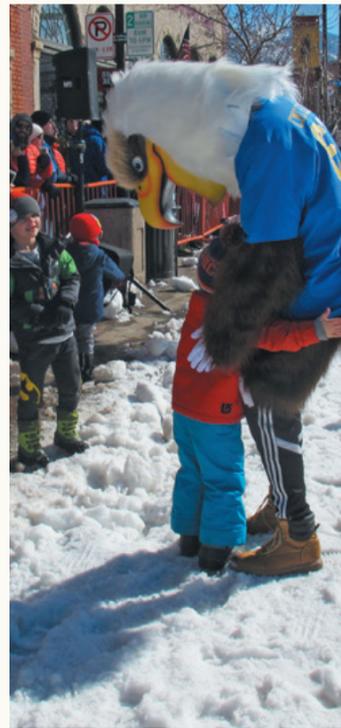
Land donors with CMC's ranch brand and theirs, Spring Valley. Photo: Charles Engelbert.



Ski area operations faculty Jason Gusaas leads graduates on Dutch Henry Hill, Leadville. Photo: © Katie Girtman/Studio Kiva



Strawberry Days parade float, Glenwood Springs.



Swoop and young fans, Steamboat Springs. Photo: Heather Hutchinson



Leadville's Bob Hartzell and Gemvieve "Genny" Michael, Governor's Residence. Photo: Kristin Heath Colon



Professor Dr. Tom Buesch (left) and former faculty Paul Kovach, Aspen. Photo: Charles Engelbert



President Hauser, Lin Stickler and former President Bob Spuhler, Spring Valley Photo: Charles Engelbert



President Hauser and CMC supporters, Steamboat Springs. Photo: Heather Hutchinson



Student Jesus Salgado at the Golden Gala. Photo: Charles Engelbert



The 50th celebration planning committee at the Golden Gala. Photo: Charles Engelbert



(L-R) John and Marianne Ackerman, former Former Rifle dean Harry Silver and his wife Marina Florian, Rifle. Photo: Charles Engelbert



CMC staff at the Buena Vista Habitat for Humanity workday.



Students and alumni, Leadville. Photo: Kristin Heath Colon



Welcome Back to School & Reunion, Breckenridge. Photo: Charles Engelbert



Winter Carnival, Steamboat Springs. Photo: Heather Hutchinson

# CMC Foundation

## Building Brighter Futures—Because of You!

Fifty years ago, Colorado Mountain College came into existence through the gifts of others. The first organizing committee gave their time promoting a ballot measure to create CMC throughout five mountainous counties. Those residents voted to give with their property tax dollars. Landowners gave up acreage from their family ranches. Faculty gave up promised raises to keep the college afloat through an early financial crisis. Long before the creation of the Foundation, the spirit of giving was woven into the fabric of CMC.

The CMC Foundation has built on that giving ethos, serving as the college's fundraising and community engagement partner. Gifts to the college come in all shapes and sizes. From a staff member who elects a \$10-per-month payroll deduction for the CMC Team Fund, to the multi-million dollar endowment created from the dying wish of a donor, it is Because Of You that we are able to support our students.



Photo: Ed Kosmicki

### INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION

Through the Mountain Futures Fund, every graduating high school senior in the college district has had concurrent enrollment choices and access to a \$1,000 running start toward their first semesters at CMC.



Photo: Ed Kosmicki

## CMC Foundation Scholarships

More than 500 students receive scholarships each year, (currently representing 160 named scholarships and \$1.2 million in annual support).

**“Philanthropic gifts have both an immediate and long-term impact on transforming the lives of students. Scholarships have long been a pillar of the CMC Foundation and play a key role in ensuring all students have the opportunity to pursue their college and career dreams.”**

– Kristin Heath Colon, CMC Vice President for Advancement/Foundation CEO



Donors and scholarship recipients at CMC Vail Valley in Edwards. Photo: Kristin Colon



Photo: Ed Kosmicki

### STRONG INTERNAL SUPPORT

Nearly seven out of ten faculty and staff members give to the annual CMC Team Fund via the Foundation.

**“I believe in helping students reach their greatest potential. CMC is truly a gift to our community, and I am honored to help make education more accessible in any way I can.”**

– Katherine “K” Cesark, Assistant Professor of Art, CMC Aspen

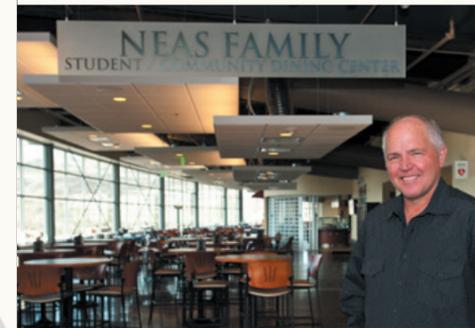


Photo: Ed Kosmicki

### CAPITAL & COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

No matter how connected we become in the virtual world, we will always need buildings to foster community, exchange ideas and collaborate across diverse perspectives. Our campus spaces have been generously supported and enhanced through private gifts.

**“My parents strongly believed in investing back into the community in which you live. Investing in Steamboat’s building campaign not only accomplished this but also created a legacy to my parents.”**

– Bere Neas, speaking at the Grand Opening of the Neas Family Student/Community Dining Center



Colorado Mountain College and the Garfield County Public Library joined forces to turn 13,000 square feet of shared vacant office space

in historic downtown Glenwood Springs into a flexible, state-of-the-art venue for educational, nonprofit and public-sector groups to meet, think and collaborate. Over \$2.2 million was raised through an inspired blend of private and public support including the Morgridge Family Foundation, the Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District, the Boettcher Foundation, and the Gates Family Foundation. In 2017 Morgridge Commons opened for community use.



Photo: Ed Kosmicki

### CMC CHAMPIONS: CALAWAY AND YOUNG

Jim Calaway (left) and Bob Young are well-known for their philanthropic generosity throughout CMC’s footprint. Colorado Mountain College has been at the top of each of their lists for decades. Read more about their CMC legacies and impact on page 68 (Calaway) and page 92 (Young).



Photo: Charles Engelbert

### LEGACY OF GIVING

During the 50th Anniversary, former Foundation CEO Alexandra Yajko was honored with a room in Morgridge Commons, in recognition of her impact on countless students who benefited from her leadership, personal generosity, and advocacy for CMC.

**“The power of people doing good forms strong communities.”**

– Alexandra Yajko, longtime CMC Foundation CEO



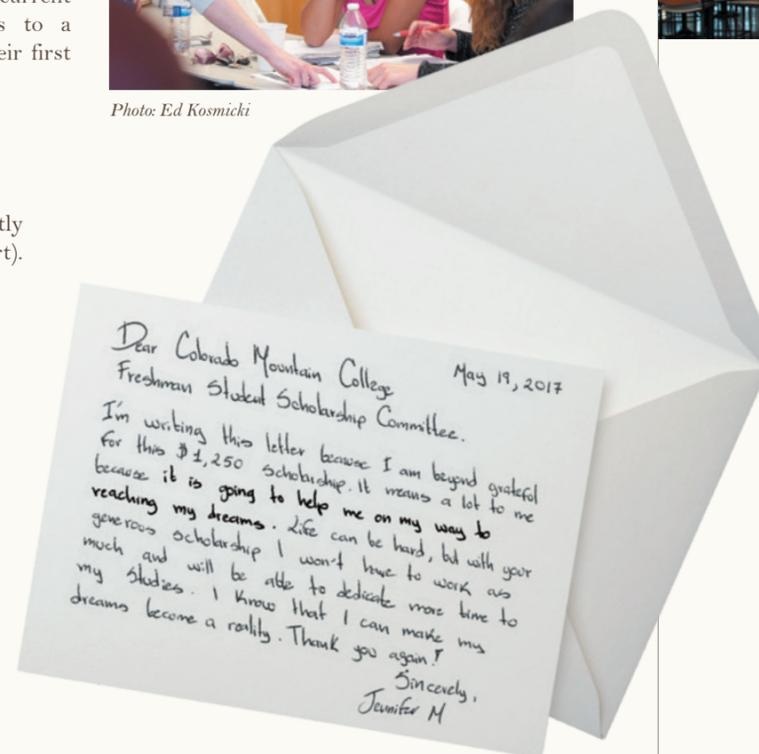
Mother-and-daughter scholarship recipients Barbara and Crissi Boe both earned degrees at CMC Rifle. Photo: Kate Lapides

**“While trying to obtain my degree I have been working two jobs. This scholarship will allow me to take the time to really do well in my studies.”**

– Crissi Boe, CMC Rifle student



**TO LEARN MORE** about how you can help change lives through the transformative gift of education, visit [cmcfoundation.org](http://cmcfoundation.org)



# Afterword

There has long been talk about—and even a few attempts over the years to start—an official history of Colorado Mountain College. Capturing the stories about all of the characters who brought this amazing college to life, and nurtured it through challenging years, has daunted many before us.

But some, admirably, have tried. The genesis of the CMC campus in Steamboat Springs has been thoroughly documented in *Miracle on a Mountain: The Story of a College*. This 1987 book was written by Lucile Bogue, founder of Yampa Valley College, Colorado Mountain College Steamboat Springs' predecessor.

In addition, some timeline and anecdotal information about various campuses and CMC as a whole had been collected and shared via booklets, articles, and newspaper inserts commemorating the college's 25th and 40th anniversaries. But that's as far as the idea of a Colorado Mountain College history had gone.

A few years ago, however, with the upcoming advent of Colorado Mountain College's 50th anniversary, it was clear that the college's stories and timelines needed to be pulled together into an accurate, thorough, and official history. A sense of dogged determination led the effort, spearheaded by Marketing and Communications Director Doug Stewart, a 1986 alumnus and an employee for more than half the college's existence.

Doug sought out Mike Wadyko, an adjunct instructor of history, to start digging through college archives and interviewing past employees and alumni. Once a core body of information was amassed, veteran Roaring Fork Valley journalist Donna Gray was brought on board to do more research and to piece together the narrative. A team of fact-checkers and editors, who are listed at the front of this book, combed over numerous drafts, resulting in the book you now hold in your hands.

The theme for our 50th anniversary celebrations throughout 2017 has been "Because of You." We are here, quite simply, because of the thousands of dreamers, business leaders, ranchers, and other supporters who have believed in us for all these years. I don't use the term "unique" lightly, but now that you have read this book you can see that this college is indeed unique. Our service area is unique, our funding structure and local district college designation is unique, our evolved and blended two- and four-year mission is unique, our communities and students and supporters and employees are like no other collection of people anywhere.

Especially during this 50th anniversary year, I've repeatedly told our alumni, students, current and past employees, and community members that we stand on the shoulders of giants. My gratitude is never-ending to those visionaries and generous souls who have made our Colorado Mountain College a reality. I hope you now have a clearer idea not only of who those giants have been, but of how they have led us here.

All of us who have helped to carry the baton of this amazing, one-of-a-kind college into the start of its next 50 years hope you have enjoyed reading about our history—and that you will be among those who help to lift Colorado Mountain College into an elevated and even greater future.



— Dr. Carrie Besnette Hauser  
President & CEO, Colorado Mountain College



Patrick Harvey.....1966 - 1973	Robert Woodward.....1985 - 1995	Richard Bateman.....2001 - 2011
David W. Delaplane.....1966 - 1973	George Cowen.....1986-1987	John Pattillo.....2003 - 2007
Howard Clark.....1966 - 1973	Helen Weiss.....1986 - 1993 2003 - 2007	Anne Freedman.....2005 - 2011
Harold W. Koonce.....1966 - 1973	Judith Riddle Hayward.....1987 - 2005	Roy Brubacher.....2005 - 2009
David E. Barbee.....1966 - 1973	Paul Sheldon.....1987 - 1988	Dan Hanin.....2007 - 2007
David J. Dunn.....1973 - 1983	Richard Morton.....1987 - 1997	Benita Bristol.....2007 - 2009
Richard C. Martin.....1973 - 1985	Tom Oliver.....1988 - 1989	Stan Orr.....2007 - 2011
Daniel Sederstrom.....1973 - 1981	Bill Simmons.....1989 - 1993	Wesley Duran.....2007 - 2011
Sunnie Waggoner .....1973 <i>Ex-officio member</i>	Donald Salanty.....1993 - 2001	Glenn Davis.....2009- 2017
Charles P. Anderson.....1981-1983	Robert Dillon.....1993 - 1996	Mary Ellen Denomy.....2009- 2017
William E. Clark.....1981-1985	Jeanne Sheriff.....1994 - 2003	Shalee Cunningham.....2009 - 2011
Doris A. Bailey.....1981 - 1985	John Giardino.....1995 - 2003	Robert Taylor.....2011 - 2015
Rex Pielstick.....1981 <i>Ex-officio member</i>	George Stranahan.....1996 - 1997	Kathy Goudy.....2011 - Present
Ed Hill.....1982 1985 - 1998	Gary Beach.....1997 - 2001	Ken Brenner.....2011 - Present
John P. Wells.....1983 - 1985	Jim Rodkey.....1997 - 2001	Pat Chlouber.....2011 - Present
Theodore Shipman.....1984 - 1985	Rob Dick.....1998 - 2006	Charles Cunniffe.....2013 - Present
Jan Marshall.....1985 - 1987	Doris Dewton.....2001 - 2009 2017- Present	Patty Theobald.....2015 - Present
Michelle Balcomb.....1985 - 1994	Jacque Whitsitt.....2001 - 2005	Peg Portscheller.....2017 - Present







