

# THE LAMP

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MONDAY • AUGUST 25, 2014 • VOL. 61 • ISSUE NO. 1

## Welcome back!

### Hope keeps swinging

#### Ex-baseball player left paralyzed

By Ryan Wilson  
Editor

Jon Gilson opened his eyes for the first time after being in a two-weeklong coma. He awoke in a bed in St. John's Intensive Care Unit, but without the ability to move his legs.

He was five months away from bringing his curveball, slider and 93-mph fastball to the Lincoln Land Community College Loggers' pitching mound, but his dreams of playing baseball at any level were dashed. His dreams of having any future in the game of baseball were shattered in a matter of seconds.

Gilson, a 2011 graduate of Rochester High School, had a traumatic brain injury and an American Spinal Injury Category B spinal injury, meaning he had incomplete sensory but no motor function below the neurological level.

In layman's terms, he is paralyzed from the shoulders down.

Gilson had suffered his injuries on Oct. 13, 2011, at 3:15 a.m., after losing control of his Ford Explorer and driving straight through a curve on Fifth Street, just past Stanford Avenue. Gilson's explorer ran up a curb and into a steel billboard post, nearly missing the Ayerco gas station in Springfield.

"My whole life was baseball," said Gilson, who had a 2.77 earned-run average in 55 2/3 innings as a senior on Rochester's baseball team. "(Baseball was) basically my one true love. It was something to say that I have accomplished, and not to be able to do the one thing that you truly love to do is probably the hardest thing to live with."

But before the accident, Gilson had been at a party with alcohol.

Gilson, then 18, was heading to his home in Springfield from this party after a dispute with one of his

Gilson, continued on Page 3



About 350 new students gathered for the new student orientation on Aug. 20 in Cass Gymnasium.

Photo Lamp/Jordan Minder

## New school year brings new faces to Lincoln Land Community College

The Lamp Staff

Lincoln Land Community College welcomed about 350 new students at the New Student Orientation lunch Aug. 20 in Cass Gymnasium. Those students will be joined by hundreds more who could not make the event, as well as several new faculty and staff.

But with changes in the State Universities Retirement System, LLCC saw an increase in faculty and staff retirees in 2014.

There were 23 faculty and staff who retired this year. That compares to 19 people retiring in 2013 and 16 in 2012.

Those 23 retirees had a combined 455 years of experience at Lincoln Land.

"These faculty and staff members had a wealth of knowledge that will not be easy to replace, but we look forward to working with our new hires who will bring new ideas and individual strengths to their positions," said Junell Ransdell, associate vice president, LLCC Human Resources.

The college also saw the passing of three longtime faculty members. It lost Jim Van Kleek, the Aviation program director; Cynthia Dipert, adjunct reading instructor in Taylorville; and 'Marty' Morris, adjunct philosophy instructor.

The Lamp staff has included surveys of the new faculty, lists of new staff and retirees, and obituaries of the faculty who passed during the summer 2014.





This newspaper is dedicated to the students, faculty and staff of Lincoln Land Community College.

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## Lamp promises brighter future

By Ryan Wilson  
Editor



First of all, The Lamp would like to welcome everyone back to school. We hope you had a nice, relaxing summer.

But, phew, it has been a long (long!) time without a new edition of The Lamp. That will not be the case anymore, though. Promise.

Last semester, like everyone, we were disappointed in our inconsistency. We take full responsibility for that. But we can promise this: That will never happen again. Ever.

This school year, we will be printing a fresh edition of The Lamp every three weeks. It will not only include a more complex design, but also more stories that impact students, faculty and staff of Lincoln Land Community College.

Also, thanks to the Internet, The Lamp has made a huge (perhaps cannonball-like) splash into the digital world.

We now have a website (www.thelamponline.com), which includes stories, pictures, videos, podcasts and an archive of previously published stories and editions. The videos and podcasts will feature Lamp contributors talking about the news around campus that impacts students and faculty.

The Lamp has also started Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Path, Google Plus and Tumblr pages. Follow or like our pages for news, videos and podcasts. Just go to our website,

and you will find a link to all of our social media pages.

You now can access our content whenever and wherever you want.

With raised expectations, however, we are opening our doors to more than just students interested in journalism. We feel The Lamp would be a great experience for students interested in graphic design, web design, video/audio production, marketing and logistics and more.

With your help, The Lamp will only get better. We are looking forward to a bright future, and we would love to have you along on this journey.

Good luck this semester. We wish everyone the best of luck. See you around!

Ryan Wilson can be reached at 786.2311 or lamp@llcc.edu.

## Student success is readily available

By Stacy Minton  
Staff Writer



For some college students, success may appear to be easy. This thinking is often misleading and harmful to success.

I must confess that I fell victim to that misconception. But I managed to turn my grades from an 'F' to a 'C' in two classes. I achieved this with hard work and use of resources available for all students.

I have come up with eight key steps to success in college that I hope my fellow college students will use, if they don't already.

**■ Ask questions.** The first step in a successful college education is to overcome fear of asking questions. Students should also ask their professors to clarify any assignments that are vague.

I didn't ask questions in the beginning for my Biology and Music Appreciation classes. As a result, I was failing those classes and had to ask questions about the content that was covered throughout the semester.

**■ Use the learning lab.** The second step is to make use of the Learning Lab's tutor resources for help with assignments. This option is a great because the tutors are students who excelled in the subject in which they are offering assistance.

I used this option, and it made the content in my Biology I class easier to understand.

**■ Do all the works.** Another step to success is to do all the assignments and extra credit. Don't leave any points behind. Every point is helpful to your final grade.

I took advantage of this step. It helped me achieve passing grades in

all my classes. I made the mistake of procrastinating on my assignments at the beginning in two of my classes. I needed to learn how to balance being a mother and a full-time college student. Keep in mind that a little enjoyment can help. While you're working hard, studying and completing all your assignments, save some time for fun. It's good to maintain a healthy balance.

**■ Study for everything.** Studying for all exams and tests is another way for students to have a successful education experience. Don't slack off or assume you will do fine. This is also a highly important step to being a great and effective college student. College classes often put a disproportionately large emphasis on exams and tests.

Having a home computer allows for a student to work any time, alleviating stress of completing assignments on deadline. This is especially helpful to students balancing school, a job or a family, and who are unable to use those resources in the time limit offered.

An at-home computer also lets you access online resources for classes, keeping up with emails for assignments or class cancellations, and completing essay and writing assignments at home.

If all students make use of these options then we can all as students have a successful college experience, performing well in school.

If you value your education, take advantage and follow the steps I have stated. The most important step I left to last is:

**■ Attend class.** Attending classes is highly important and if a student is ill, has an appointment, or a family emergency, please email the instructors of the classes you will be missing. This way they can email you about the assignments missed so that you can make them up. I hope for all that make use of what I said in this article finds your college experience a joyful, proud experience.

**■ Get a computer.** Coming to campus or a public library for every assignment can make success difficult. A home computer is a great tool for any student. Using college campus computer resources is helpful for completing assignments, but

it is also a hindrance with the time restrictions that those resources are available.

I know they can be expensive, so you should explore the computer bank. This is an advantage for students on financial aid receiving a Pell Grant or any student with proof of low-income status. Go to computerbank.org for more information. The computer bank fliers are available at the career development office and placed in a new student's folder packet that they receive at the advising and counseling office.

Having a home computer allows for a student to work any time, alleviating stress of completing assignments on deadline. This is especially helpful to students balancing school, a job or a family, and who are unable to use those resources in the time limit offered.

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Gilson  
continued from Page 1

friends.

"I wanted to leave (the party), and he (my friend) tried to stop me from leaving, but that didn't work," said Gilson, now 21. "So I left his house, and the last thing I remember is getting in my car, driving along down the road, and I don't really have any recollection after that."

"I remember waking up in the hospital after that, and the only thing that I could do was shrug my shoulders."

Gilson said he had an idea of why this was the case, but his mom, Carol Gilson, was the first to break the news.

"(My mom) revealed the news to me for the first time that I was paralyzed from the shoulders down, and I was just shocked, and I didn't know what to think," Gilson said.

This, however, was not the only hardship his family endured. In fewer than two years after Gilson's accident, his dad, John Gilson, suffered a stroke, while his mom, Carol Gilson, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. But they have since become closer to what life used to be like.

Already overcoming a grim 30 percent chance of surviving his accident, Gilson remains optimistic about his and his family's future.

"Having suffered a traumatic brain injury, I'm thankful to have my head on my shoulders," he said. "I have my memory, and I can think clearly."

Gilson is inspired by his parents to earn an associate degree in business administration at Lincoln Land Community College and have a successful future.

"One thing I keep in mind: 'There's always someone out there that is worse off than I am. ... It could always be worse.'"

### Future plans

Gilson has regained some arm strength, thanks to weekly physical and occupational therapy at Memorial Medical Center's Koke Mill Medical Center.

"I'm more worried about trying to get a job more than anything, trying to get strong ... trying to get my education. So I can get a job, so I don't have to penny everything down every month," he said. "(I'll) have some money to actually spend ... on what I want, instead of just spending it on medication and all



Various dining options are available down Toronto Road. There is also the on-campus option of Subway (pictured below).

Photo Lamp/Stephen Ortega

## Filling up is essential study skill

By Stephen Ortega  
Staff Writer

Lincoln Land students quickly learn that a full belly is the most essential tool for college success. But there's more than hunger to satisfy. There are the taste buds, the wallet and the clock.

When the clock is ticking, Subway is right on campus. On the lower level of Menard Hall, this great option can keep your budget in check, too.

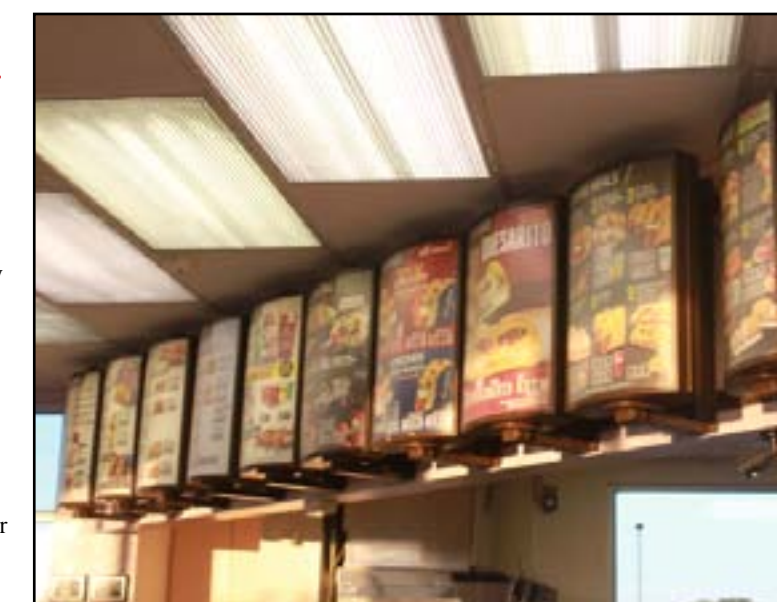
Some students, however, have encountered a lunchtime rush and turned to the vending machines. That's always a timesaving option, but Subway may speed through your order.

There is also an application on the smartphones (or any computer) that allows you to order a sandwich online. Go to order.subway.com.

By the time you get down to the restaurant, your food will be ready. Subway promises that your meal



will be ready within 15 minutes, and it allows you to create an account to make ordering and purchasing easier. Subway probably won't satisfy a student every day. So, if one has a little more time, he or she can find a smorgasbord of dining options on Toronto Road. Just 1.3 miles from the entrance to the college, hungry students will find Antonio's Pizza, China Express, Cracker Barrel, Head



West Subs, Hen House, Lake Pointe Grill, McDonald's, Taco Bell and Wendy's.

If a student has a little extra time, he or she could also eat at one of the best restaurants nearby: Lake Pointe Grill. This amazing eatery offers wonderful food, and one can study while waiting for his or her food. It is also a great place to sit down, talk and just relax.

"When I would attend classes, I

was so hungry. I never knew what to eat," said Ashley Lambert, a former LLCC student. "But I just loved that Head West was right down the street, because they have the best sub sandwiches around town."

Many students echo Lambert's sentiments about Head West, but others recommend other fare.

"I would have to say that Wendy's is a very good place to eat," one current LLCC student said. "If you want some meal that is fast and tastes really good, then go to Wendy's."

"I would recommend new ... students to go eat at Taco Bell," said Kay Marie, another student at LLCC. "Who doesn't like tacos? Plus, it's a fast meal, and when a student is rushing in between classes, it's a lifesaver. It really is the best way to go."

Assure your academic success with a good meal at a reasonable price near a nearby site.

As Marie said, "Class is so much better when you have a taco in your left hand and a Baja Blast Mountain Dew in your right."

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my organs."

Carol Gilson, on the other hand, successfully underwent a session of chemotherapy every four weeks last fall. However, one incision reopened. Doctors used a mesh to close it, but found two more spots of cancer.

"It's bad that it (the incision) ripped open, but luckily it did, because when they went back in, they were actually able to visually see the cancer that wasn't picked up on the scans," Gilson said. "So she got lucky there."

Gilson's dad is also doing better from his stroke, which caused memory and psychological problems.

"I'm blessed that I have my mom and my dad to help," Gilson said.

The Gilson family recently bought an accessible van for Gilson to use. But he does not plan to drink again.

"Even though I turned 21, I don't really have a desire to drink. ... I don't have any motivation to drink again," he said. "It's not worth ruining your life over. I mean waiting until you're 21 is not as bad as it seems."

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## Meet the New Faculty

### Ashley Green, English



#### Work/teaching experience prior to LLCC?

Prior to LLCC, I taught full time at MacMurray College. While there, I was a Rhetoric / Literature teacher, which included a variety of courses such as: Developmental Writing, College Writing, Research Writing, Public Speaking and a literature course on Iraq and Afghanistan narratives. I was also Coordinator of the Developmental Program and Rhetoric Program, and a writing specialist at the Learning Center. I worked at MacMurray for 3 years, 2 of which were full time.

Before MacMurray, I was an adjunct at Kaskaskia Community College; there I taught Basic College Writing and Analytic / Research Writing.

Finally, during my graduate training, I taught Composition and introduc-

European Literature

■ Doctorate Degree from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in 20th Century British and American Literature

#### Tell us about your family/pets/etc.

My family is originally from Waverly, where my brother, his wife and 3 daughters still live. My father lives in Springfield, and my mother has recently retired and moved back to this area as well.

I have 2 dogs, Daisy and Wealthew (odd name, I know. I was translating Beowulf when I named the latter of the 2 dogs).

#### Most challenging course taken in college?

The most challenging course I took in college, hands down, was a German translation course. I eventually dropped the class upon strong suggestion from my professor.

#### Best memory in college (besides graduating)?

This is very difficult to narrow

down. I really enjoyed my theory classes, and the late night conversations-- over endless cups of coffee-- that were always sure to ensue.

#### One thing very few people know about you?

I am a dreadful dancer, even though I LOVE to dance.

#### Cubs, Cardinals or other?

Cardinals

#### Best prank pulled on someone?

Oh, I am a terrible joker. I have never been any good at pulling off pranks, namely because I can't keep a straight face.

#### When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I had my heart set on being a marine biologist, until I realized I didn't have much talent for biology.

#### What was the worst job you ever had?

Working at Subway -- I lasted a whole week.

#### What was your first job?

Walking beans for my cousin.

#### Farthest you've ever traveled from home.

I just returned from 2 months in Nepal and Tibet, so that would have to be the farthest I have ever been from home-- literally and figuratively.

#### If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?

Probably Bhutan or Vietnam

#### Any historical figure you'd like to meet -- and why?

Alexander David-Neel  
I greatly admire Alexander David-Neel's courage and sense of adventure. She was a French aristocrat who journeyed to India and Tibet in the early 20th century. While in Tibet, she trekked the Himalayas-- concealed as a man (a monk)-- and studied under different yogis and holy men for many many years.

Friedrich Nietzsche-- what an interesting fellow!! I am intrigued by his understanding of the Dionysian / Apollonian theory and his complex analysis of human nature.

## Meet the New Faculty

### David Leitner, English



#### Work/teaching experience prior to LLCC?

After my undergraduate degree in English, I worked as a computer programmer at a little company called Computer Insights in Bloomingdale, IL. I really value those years for learning about practical and professional communication. And I worked through the uncertainty of the Year 2000 problem, which has now been nearly forgotten but was feared to be a catastrophe.

#### Degree(s) and Alma Mater(s)?

■ B.A. in English and Rhetoric from UIUC in 1998

■ M.A. in English from SIUC in 2005

■ I'm currently finishing a Ph.D. at SIUC. Don't ask me when that will be finished :)

#### Tell us about your family/pets/etc.

I have a wife named Carrie and one

daughter. We also have two old cats: a grumpy calico named Jojo, and a chilled-out black cat named Jack.

#### Most challenging course taken in college?

There are too many to count! I always enjoyed challenging myself and taking on more than I could handle. I took a Nietzsche class for grad students as a first-year student. I still don't understand Nietzsche, but I do enjoy reading his work.

#### Best memory in college (besides graduating)?

I studied in Aberdeen, Scotland for a year in a study-abroad program. That really opened my eyes up to the importance of respecting different cultures.

#### One thing very few people know about you?

I like to meditate. No one knows because it pretty much only happens when you are alone. :)

#### Cubs, Cardinals or other?

Cardinals, but I don't really follow baseball. If you ask me about MMA, I might have an opinion :)

I decided to mention nothing to her about it because I knew it would ruin her trip and she would probably come home. The fact that I would have been in the doghouse also figured into that decision. Jack miraculously came back the day before she arrived. I told her on the phone what had happened, and when she walked in the door, she took one look at Jack and said, "That's not Jack." I nearly died right there. Then she said, "Just kidding! I would know that cat anywhere." That girlfriend is now my wife, but she would not be if I had not recovered that cat.

#### When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A mix of Indiana Jones and James Bond.

#### What was the worst job you ever had?

I've washed dishes in some grungy restaurants.

#### What was your first job?

Dishwasher at the Corner Diner on the strip in Carbondale.

#### Farthest you've ever traveled from home.

I spend a summer in Schramberg, Germany on a high school exchange.

I really enjoyed hiking and exploring the Black Forest there.

#### If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?

I enjoyed traveling when I was younger, but now I'm a homebody. But that is not a very fun answer.

Anywhere? I would like to hike around New Zealand in those landscapes that were made famous in the Lord of the Rings movies.

#### Any historical figure you'd like to meet -- and why?

I'd like to meet the poet Langston Hughes. By all accounts he was a great conversationalist and personality. I find his life and the times he lived fascinating. I've also read a lot of his work, so I have some questions to ask him.

#### If I had one day to spend \$1 billion, I would:

I would make a huge wild animal preserve and allow kids from all over the world to visit for free.

## Meet the New Faculty

### Deana Schenk, English



#### Work/teaching experience prior to LLCC?

I began my teaching career at Heartland Community College in Normal, IL ten years ago. During that time I also taught briefly at Richland Community College in Decatur and online at Kaplan University. I have also been teaching as an adjunct instructor at Lincoln Land for eight years. During my time teaching, I have taught all levels of composition, introductory literature and introductory humanities classes.

#### Degree(s) and Alma Mater(s)?

My undergraduate degree is in English from Illinois College in Jacksonville and my graduate degree is in English from University of Illinois-Springfield.

#### Tell us about your family/pets/etc.

I have been married to my wonderful husband, Keith, for 20 years. We have three fantastic children--our 17-year old daughter Elizabeth, our

15-year old son Benjamin, and our 5-year old daughter Madeline. We also have a puggle named Bob and two guinea pigs--Penny and Philly.

#### Most challenging course taken in college?

Chemistry was by far the course I struggled with most in college. In addition to the content challenges of a course that felt like a foreign language, the large lecture hall experience and the 8:00 am class time did not do anything to add to my success.

#### Best memory in college (besides graduating)?

Going to the quad during several literature classes, spreading out in the grass, and sharing random analysis of the works we were studying.

#### One thing very few people know about you?

I am deathly afraid of balls--basketballs, baseballs, footballs, etc... I think it comes from a softball experience when I was quite young when I missed catching the softball and it hit my nose, which resulted in a bloodied nose. I always cringe and hide when balls get thrown; I have even been known to hide from Nerf balls.

#### Cubs, Cardinals or other?

Cubs--even though I am originally from the St. Louis metro east area.

#### Best prank pulled on someone?

Several years ago, my husband was in two vehicle accidents in just a few weeks time. Neither were his fault, he was physically fine, and it was April Fool's Day, so I called him at work and told him that our insurance company called me and told he he was too great of a risk to insure, so they were cancelling just him. He was furious. I had to tell him the truth more quickly than I had anticipated because he was getting off the phone to call our agent. Since I was sure that conversation could have ended with an actual cancellation, I had to cut the joke short.

My husband is the real prankster, so to be able to get him is quite a challenge, which is really what made it a great prank.

#### When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a writer.

#### What was the worst job you ever had?

I spent a summer during college

not bathrooms people would choose to enter. I lasted exactly 6 weeks.

#### What was your first job?

My first job, at age 16, was as a sales clerk at Kmart.

#### Farthest you've ever traveled from home.

I spent six weeks traveling Europe, which included visits to England, France, Germany, Amsterdam, and Switzerland.

#### If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?

Australia to scuba dive at the Great Barrier Reef.

#### Any historical figure you'd like to meet -- and why?

Jane Austen: her wit and insight enthralls me in her writing, so I would love to have the opportunity to talk to her about her characters and her time period.

#### If I had one day to spend \$1 billion, I would:

I would buy a vacation home as close to Disney World as possible, buy new homes/cars for myself, friends, and family, and give a good deal of it away to charities benefiting children and cancer research.

## Meet the New Faculty

### Tim McKenzie, Journalism & Humanities



#### Work/teaching experience prior to LLCC?

I have been teaching part time since graduate school. I started teaching for a year at Blinn College in Bryan, Texas. I taught at St. Louis Community College -- both Forest Park and Florissant Valley -- for a year. Most of my teaching, about 10 years, was teaching part time at Parkland College in Champaign. I've been teaching as an adjunct at Lincoln Land Community College for a year.

I also worked as a reporter and copy editor. I interned at the Effingham Daily News for a summer and the Peoria Journal Star for a year. I worked at the Herald-Palladium in St. Joseph, Mich., for less than a year and at the Herald and Review in Decatur for more than seven years.

#### Degree(s) and Alma Mater(s)?

I have a bachelor's in Philosophy-Religion from Greenville College in

Greenville, Ill., a master's in Philosophy from Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, and a master's in Journalism from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

#### Tell us about your family/pets/etc.

I have two wonderful little boys. Max turns 3 years old the first week of school. Truman is 18 months.

#### Most challenging course taken in college?

Without a doubt, it would be a symbolic logic course in graduate school.

It focused on set theory, and I was not prepared for it.

#### Best memory in college (besides graduating)?

College is a long time ago. I would just say hanging out late at night with friends, playing video games and talking about philosophy and theology.

#### One thing very few people know about you?

Farming fascinates me. I love to know the stages of crop production. I read farming blogs (not every day, but regularly). My grandfather was a farmer, and my dad grew up on a farm. I'll often call my dad to ask him questions about farming.

#### Cubs, Cardinals or other?

Cardinals

#### Best prank pulled on someone?

It's been a long time since I pulled pranks, but I may have been involved with a few in my younger days. I'll give a recent one that I'm not sure qualifies as a "prank."

#### When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

About three years ago, at Christmas-time, I went to St. Charles, Mo., for their Christmas festivities. I went with my wife, my 3-month-old son and my brother. We were waiting in a line of

cars to get to the historic downtown area. I noticed a house with lots of rooster figurines in the windows. I pointed it out, and I said I should buy that person a rooster.

So, while we were downtown, I bought her a rooster. As I was leaving, against the protests of my brother who thought I was crazy, I stopped at her house, rang the bell, and I told her, "I saw you collect roosters as I was driving by, so I thought I'd get you one. Merry Christmas!" I gave it to her, turned and walked off.

My brother told my parents who gave me a rooster figurine for Christmas.

#### When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a veterinarian.

#### What was the worst job you ever had?

I worked in a cabinet factory for one day. I was just lousy at it, and I would have to stop the assembly line because I would fall behind in my work. That's embarrassing.

#### What was your first job?

My brother and I mowed lawns. We mowed 70 lawns and would hire

our friends to help us. Maybe it's just nostalgia, but I really enjoy mowing now.

#### Farthest you've ever traveled from home.

I spent a semester in England.

#### If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?

I'd love to go to a lot of places, but I find Asia fascinating. I'd like to travel through China and India.

#### Any historical figure you'd like to meet -- and why?

I would like to meet Socrates. It would be great to talk philosophy with him, and I'd be curious what it was really like to spend time with him.

#### If I had one day to spend \$1 billion, I would:

I'd buy the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. A decade ago, it would have taken the whole \$1 billion to buy it. Now, I'd probably have a decent amount left.

With the remaining money, I'd buy cars, homes, etc., for myself, my family and friends. Then, I'd give the rest away. I'd probably focus on educational charities.

I'd buy the State University of English after 17 years at LLCC.

■ Bill Callaway retired as Professor of English after 18 years at LLCC.

■ Bill Callaway retired as Director of Associate Degree Radiography Program after 21 years at LLCC.

■ Barb Charlton retired as Accounting Technician after 23 years at LLCC.

■ Teresa Dickey-Rogers retired as Program Assistant of Retention and Student Success after 15 years at LLCC.

■ David Laubersheimer retired as Dean of Arts and Humanities after 27 years at LLCC.

■ Glenda Thomas retired as Administrative Assistant to the Dean after 29 years at LLCC.

■ Russ Kuster retired as Professor of Electronics after 27 years at LLCC.

■ Mindy Catteau retired as Coordinator of Registration Services after 26 years at LLCC.

■ Jeri Buckner retired as Professor of English after 24 years at LLCC.

■ Brenda Brown retired as Child Development Teacher after 17 years at LLCC.

■ Judy Wagblast retired as Director of Community Education after five years at LLCC.

■ Grace Carriker retired as Academic Success Professional after 14 years at LLCC.

■ Lopian Jeff retired as Mechanical Maintenance Technician after 26 years at LLCC.

## Meet the New Faculty

### Anthony Tate, Biology



#### Work/teaching experience prior to LLCC?

I have actually been teaching full-time at LLCC since the fall of 2013; however, my position became tenure track this past February. Before coming to LLCC I taught part-time at John A. po

#### Degree(s) and Alma Mater(s)?

I graduated from Eastern Illinois University in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in biological sciences with a minor in chemistry. I obtained my master's degree in wetland ecology from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale in 2010.

#### Tell us about your family/pets/etc.

I have been married to my wife, Rebecca, since 2010. We do not have any children at this point; however, we definitely hope to in the near future. We have two dogs, Henry our yellow Labrador retriever and Molly a beagle.

#### Most challenging course taken in college?

This is an easy one... It would have to be a course titled "Gene Regulatory Networks" in graduate school. The course description was as follows: an examination of the integration of genes into developmental, abiotic stress response, metabolic and light gene regulatory networks. Includes motif discovery, cis-regulatory elements, discussion of transcription factor families, RNA interference, network theory, feedback loops, cytoplasmic inheritance, maternal effect, post-transcriptional and post-translational regulation.

#### If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?

Australia to scuba dive at the Great Barrier Reef.

#### Any historical figure you'd like to meet -- and why?

Jane Austen: her wit and insight enthralls me in her writing, so I would love to have the opportunity to talk to her about her characters and her time period.

#### If I had one day to spend \$1 billion, I would:

I would buy a vacation home as close to Disney World as possible, buy new homes/cars for myself, friends, and family, and give a good deal of it away to charities benefiting children and cancer research.

Sound like Chinese??? Well, it did to me as well in the beginning.

#### Best memory in college (besides graduating)?

This is tough because there are so many. Other than receiving the education that has enabled me to have my desired career, I would have to say that making friendships that I know will last has to be my best memory.

#### One thing very few people know about you?

I have played the guitar since I was in seventh grade. I also attempt to sing. I used to play open mic night at a few places in Carbondale while in graduate school. I need to find a place to play here in Springfield.

#### Cubs, Cardinals or other?

Cardinals, but I have to admit that baseball isn't my favorite sport. I am much more interested in football and basketball.

#### Best prank pulled on someone?

I think I'll pass on sharing any of my younger "shenanigans"... ☺

#### When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a pilot, like my father.

#### What was the worst job you ever had?

I worked at a County Market for about a week when I was at EIU. I thought I was going to be a "stock boy" but instead they put me behind the express line register.

#### What was your first job?

I worked at the Effingham County Memorial Airport as a teenager. My duties included: mowing along the runway and around runway lights, fueling aircrafts, and assisting my father with basic maintenance of

aircrafts. It was a pretty cool job for a 16 year old!

#### Farthest you've ever traveled from home.

My wife and I traveled to Jamaica for our honeymoon.

#### If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?

I have always wanted to visit Australia. I would love the opportunity to snorkel the Great Barrier Reef!

#### Any historical figure you'd like to meet -- and why?

I would like to meet Charles Darwin. I would love to hear a firsthand account of Darwin's voyage on the HMS Beagle, and how this voyage changed Darwin's life and set the stage for his theory of evolution.

#### If I had one day to spend \$1 billion, I would:

I would first make sure my family and friends could live comfortably for the rest of their lives. I would set aside a significant portion of the money to donate to deserving charities. Then, I would have a little fun... I would put in a bid to buy the Chicago Bulls (my true favorite sports team). Believe it or not, I'm not even sure the entire \$1 billion would be a winning bid.

## Check us out online

# www.TheLampOnline.com

With changes in the State Universities Retirement System, Lincoln Land





## Where is it?

Photos by Stephen Ortega

The Lamp challenges you to test your knowledge of Lincoln Land Community College. We want to know if you can find these spots on campus.

As if the challenge isn't exciting enough, we will offer a reward to the person who can identify the most locations. The winner will receive a \$50 gift card.

Participants should submit their answers by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 10. The Lamp will accept submissions in the following ways:

- Using our online form at [www.TheLampOnline.com/contest](http://www.TheLampOnline.com/contest).
- Emailing your list to the editor at [lamp@lcc.edu](mailto:lamp@lcc.edu).
- Submitting the form below to the feedback box outside The Lamp office (which is in Menard 2275).

### THE FINE PRINT:

Employees of Lincoln Land Community College are not allowed to participate. We're sorry, but you probably know this campus too well. However, "student workers" are allowed to participate. The Lamp staff and their family members are not allowed to participate either.

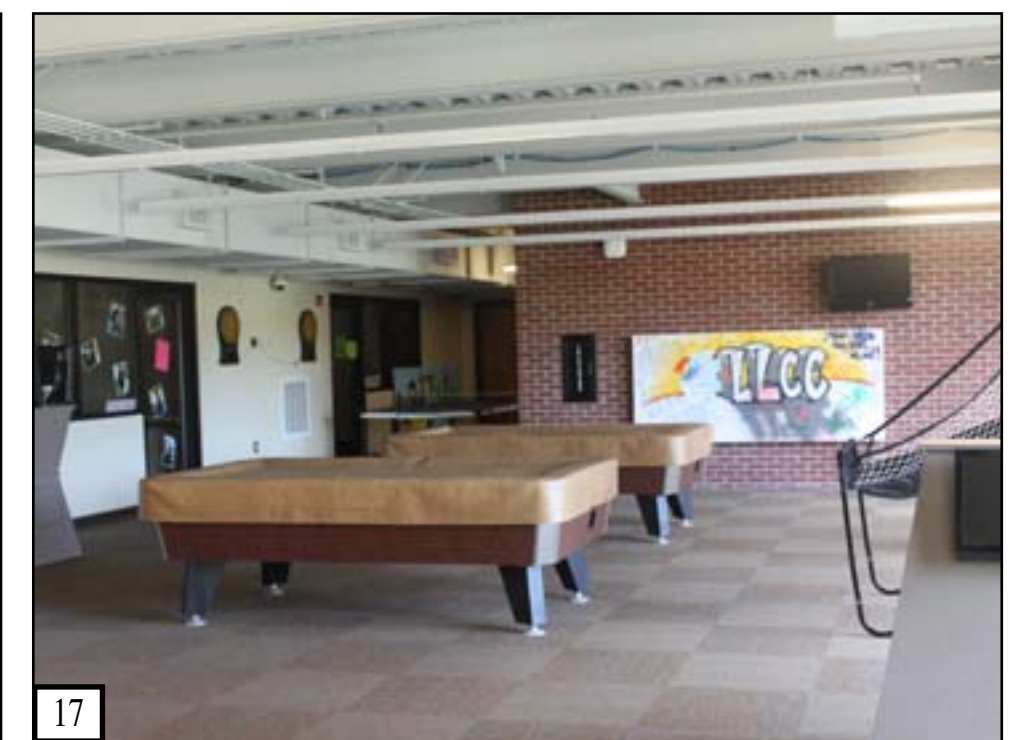
In the event of a tie, we will split the \$50 prize among recipients (meaning two \$25 gift cards or five \$10 gift cards). While half our staff thinks 200 gift cards of 25 cents each is a good idea, the other half won the argument. We'll do a drawing if there are six or more winners.

The Lamp editors will act as judges as to whether or not your location descriptions are correct. It is at their sole discretion if your answers are right.



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## Actors bring sword play, mature themes to LLCC stage

Photos and Story by Jordan Minder  
The Lamp Assistant/Visual Editor

Lincoln Land acting students took the stage to perform Jeff Goode's "Your Swash is Unbuckled."

This tastefully rambunctious play was recommended for individuals ages 17 and up, due to mature themes and some violence.

It is a collection of nine stage combat plays. Each skit was about 10 minutes long, and the actors brought to life the fantasies of a "naughty librarian."

The librarian sat on the side of

the stage reading tawdry romance novels as the cast acted out the stories.

The show was packed with buccaneers, damsels, thieves and gladiators of all kinds. Piracy, robbery and love were prevalent in the pirate-

themed skits, which were filled with sword play and mature themes.

A crowd-engaging lady pirate opened the play by asking the audience to turn off their cell phones and concluded with several group ARRR's.

Mark Hardiman, professor of theatre, directed the production that was performed in the lower level of Sangamon Hall South.

Actors played multiple roles. The cast included Rebekah Lange, Katie Steinhour, Arthur B. Dhermy,

Jefferson Davis Gentry, Keith Barron, Samantha Lewis, Shannon Murphy, August Roy, Emily Watts, Nick Snyder and Brett Wands.

The assistant director and conductor of "Yarr Orchestra" was A.J. O'Shea. Flight choreographer was August Roy. Stage manager was Valerie Perrero. Costume design was Katie Laughlin. Sound design was Jefferson Davis Gentry and Dylan Smith. Lighting design was David A. Kelm.







Jim Van Kleek (left) instructs student, Steve Bradley (right) about preparing an airplane engine. Van Kleek died July 29 at age 59.

Photos courtesy Dave Pietrzak

## Van Kleek helped Aviation Program soar

The Lamp staff

SPRINGFIELD – Jim Van Kleek was known as a meticulous craftsman, a storyteller a great leader, a good friend and “a big teddy bear.”

Van Kleek, Lincoln Land Community College’s Aviation program director, died July 29 at age 59, nine months after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Standing well over 6 feet tall, Van Kleek was known by some as “a big teddy bear,” said David Pietrzak, who took over as program director.

“Anything that Jim left his mark on, people had something good to say,” he said, pointing to Van Kleek’s involvement not only in the Aviation program, but also in his church and other activities.

Van Kleek was “always willing to help and teach. He didn’t try to keep his stuff a secret,” said Rick Stillman, an Aviation instructor.

“If you got him in class, he would almost teach by telling stories ... everything from growing up in the hills of southern Missouri to progressing onto the rest of his life,” Stillman said.

Born April 7, 1955, in Kansas City, Mo., Van Kleek spent 20 years in the U.S. Air Force. He came to Springfield in 1993 after retiring from the Air Force, where he oversaw a sheet metal



Student Joel Schnieder, now a corporate pilot, hugs Van Kleek after receiving his certificate.

plant for plane repairs in Omaha, Neb.

Pietrzak met Van Kleek when they worked together at Garrett Aviation, now StandardAero. Van Kleek went on to work for the Air Combat Museum at the Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport, where he was able to use his skills and passion for vintage airplanes.

Van Kleek was known as being meticulous, an important characteristic for anyone charged with making sure airplanes are ready to take flight.

His passion for craftsmanship and artistry led him to work on “war birds,” the planes that the United States mass produced in the 1940s to take on Adolph Hitler, the Japanese and the Axis powers in World War II.

The United States built as many planes in the 1940s as the rest of the world combined, Pietrzak said. Yet after 70 years, very few of those planes are still around, let alone capable of flight.

There may be some museum pieces, restored for aesthetic purposes and hoisted into their final resting places for spectators to view. But Van Kleek was part of a small group of enthusiasts who helped the war birds soar again, Pietrzak said.

It’s an expensive and difficult task, he said. The workers try to maintain historical accuracy, with a few modern upgrades in communication to meet modern-day requirements by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Van Kleek worked on several projects, but also his expertise and connections made it possible for Lincoln Land students to apply their skills in repairing a B-17 bomber in 2013 while on tour in Springfield and a P-51 Mustang

**“We saw this place go — due to his hard work and leadership — go from mediocre to a first-class operation.”**

- David Pietrzak

fighter plane.

There aren’t too many mechanical devices working after 70 years, Stillman said. It’s not an easy task to keep them ready to perform.



Van Kleek talks to Aviation student.

In November 2007, Van Kleek took over as program director of the Aviation Program.

“We saw this place go — due to his hard work and leadership — go from mediocre to a first-class operation,” Pietrzak said.

The 18-month program currently has 24 students in the airframe and powerplant aviation maintenance program. The program prepares students to obtain FAA airframe and powerplant certificate.

Van Kleek had “a lot of passion for what he did and doing it well ... and for sharing that knowledge, which I think is what really brought him to the school,” Stillman said. “He thought aviation was a wonderful career ... one of those secrets that wasn’t supposed to be a secret.”

Pietrzak and Stillman were surprised by how quickly Van Kleek’s cancer advanced. His illness forced Van Kleek to announce his retirement.

The college planned a large sendoff party for Van Kleek on June 18, but his health forced its cancellation.

The Aviation program still got one last chance to express its gratitude.

The tight-knit group often holds barbecues. On a day when Van Kleek was feeling better, he came into the program’s facilities for an

impromptu lunch with staff and students. The crew gave Van Kleek a runway light attached to a plaque as a way of thanking him.

“I’ve been working 40-some years in the working world since high school,” Pietrzak said. “This has definitely been the best job I’ve had.”

Pietrzak said it will be different without Van Kleek. There is a hole in the Aviation program. “We’ve lost one of our great inspirations,” Stillman said. “We will press on, but we will never replace him.”

Van Kleek is survived by his wife, Janie, of Riverton, seven children and 10 grandchildren.



Van Kleek’s name is listed on a World War II airplane he worked on.

## ‘Marty’ Morris faced his death with humor

Philosophy instructor was 2009 Outstanding Adjunct of the Year

By Ryan Wilson  
Editor

When Isaac ‘Marty’ Morris died June 27, 2014, after a nine-month battle with cancer, there was not only grief at his funeral and visitation, there was whiskey.

Pastor Tom Christell said they were looking on the bright side of life. They were celebrating the life of Morris.

As part of that celebration, some people drank a shot glass full of Jamison’s Irish whiskey around his casket before he was buried at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield.

Morris, 65, was an adjunct philosophy professor at Lincoln Land Community College for more than 30 years. He helped LLCC develop its first online philosophy courses and its first online philosophy degree.

“I remember I used to joke that I needed to recruit additional people (to help Morris), because I said, ‘If Marty gets hit by a bus, our (philosophy) degree goes away,’” said David Laubersheimer, who recently retired as the Dean of Lincoln Land’s Arts and Humanities department. “I remember the day he came in to tell me that he had been diagnosed with cancer. He said, ‘I got hit by a bus.’ ... That was Marty’s sense of humor.”

Laubersheimer said he and Morris were close friends, and they enjoyed Monty Python and discussing philosophy. Laubersheimer also enjoyed Morris’s sense of humor.

To illustrate his sense of humor, Morris was photographed wearing a shirt that read, ‘I’m not dead yet,’ on his first day of chemo. After he died, he wore the same shirt in his casket. But two words were covered up, so the shirt now read, ‘I’m dead.’

Christell, the pastor of Grace Evangelical Church, also gave Morris a shirt that said, ‘I have chemo brain, what’s your excuse?’ Christell said the shirt was dedicated to some of the things Morris said due to his chemo.

Christell said Morris, though, always found the positives of life, even during his last few months.

“He loved life to its fullest,” said Christell, who knew Morris for six years.

In fact, Morris would often joke about these shirts and chemo, despite being told his chemotherapy was not working after two rounds. Since this was the case, he decided to stop chemo and enjoy the remainder of his life.

“He wanted to have some quality of life that he had left, and the way he handled his own death was amazing,” Laubersheimer said. “Sometimes when people know that they are dying, it can be very difficult for the people around them. And he (Morris) did everything he could to make it not difficult for them (his family). I think everybody would agree with that, including his wife, Carol.”

So Morris planned his own visitation and funeral. He requested the songs ‘Ave Maria,’ ‘Amazing Grace’ and his favorite, ‘Always Look on the Bright Side of Life’ by Monty Python, to be played.

He also requested only Christell and Laubersheimer to give sermons



Isaac ‘Marty’ Morris often joked about cancer and chemotherapy through T-shirts. Morris died June 27 at age 65.

Photos courtesy the Morris family



at his funeral. Morris did not want his family members to speak.

“He wanted the family to be the family,” Christell said. Morris wanted his former colleague Laubersheimer to discuss his relationship with Lincoln Land.

“What I had to say, I wrote from my heart,” Laubersheimer said. “Marty was an extraordinary man. I described him in my eulogy as a renaissance man, and he very much was that. And I loved it that he had just a really warped sense of humor, which I really appreciate.”

“His ability to love — whether it was his wife or his friend or his pastor — had no bottom to it,” Christell said. “It was just an incredible thing, and a lot of it was based on his faith. When he got sick ... I’m sitting there crying, and he’s going, ‘I’m fine I know where I’m going. I know what’s ahead of me.’”

In the years Morris and Christell knew each other, Christell said they became close friends.

They would often have breakfast

Jungle Jim’s in Springfield with their wives. Often times, Christell and Morris would have a drink together. Morris would order his favorite, Jamison’s Irish whiskey.

“My wife says, ‘When Marty laughs, it was one of those deep-in-his-soul laughs that came booming out,’” Christell said. “If you don’t know Marty, you thought it was a fake laugh, which it wasn’t ... He loved life.”

And he did. He enjoyed every minute of his life.

Morris was also well respected by many of his colleagues at Lincoln Land.

“I think he helped me understand patience better,” said Terry Logsdon, a full-time philosophy professor at Lincoln Land who knew Morris for 12 years. “Marty was very patient, and we would have discussions not only about philosophy and religion, but also about teaching. And Marty had been doing it (teaching) longer than I have, even though he retired from a position with the state government.”

**“His ability to love — whether it was his wife or his friend — had no bottom to it.”**

- Tom Christell

Morris, who graduated from MacMurray College in 1972 and got his master’s from Butler University, retired from the state in 2008 after 30 years with the Illinois Department of Insurance.

Because he had all of this experience working for the state, Logsdon said, “I don’t think he was really reluctant to make judgments of people. He was really expansive in his acceptance of people, and I think some of that — maybe not enough — rubbed off on me.”

Morris was, in fact, the recipient of the 2009 Outstanding Adjunct of the Year for the impact he made at LLCC.

“That’s really saying something, and, boy, did he deserve it,” Logsdon said. “He did so much for this school and certainly for the philosophy program. ... I mean a very capable guy and well respected by his colleagues and students.”

“He was a great colleague. He was a very good teacher,” Laubersheimer said. “He was a very good friend, and I for one am going to miss him.”

When Morris found out he had cancer last December, Tim McKenzie, a philosophy and journalism professor at Lincoln Land, was asked to take over Morris’s online classes last spring.

“Although I’ve taught online (classes) for several years, I felt like I had a lot to improve, after seeing his detail and thorough work. He had videos, news stories and cartoons throughout,” said McKenzie, who has been teaching for around 10 years. “His use of cartoons and humorous videos showed a guy with a unique sense of humor. I don’t know where he got all of his material, but he clearly had spent a lot of time collecting humor.”

But Morris was more than just a philosopher/professor at Lincoln Land. He wrote two books, ‘The Absence of Goodness’ and ‘Along the River Road’ about murder mysteries in Sangamon County. He also wrote book reviews and blogged about culture for the State Journal-Register.

Outside of work, he loved fishing with his dog, Nike, traveling with his wife and helping his church.

“He was so many things to so many people,” Christell said in his sermon at Morris’s funeral. “He was a brother, father, grandfather, great grandfather, a true friend. He was a teacher, writer, philosopher, sounding board, liked to joke. He was a wearer of many hats.”

He said Morris “could have cared less” about what he was wearing. He

cared more about helping his church.

Not only did he often replace Christell at weekend services, but he was also elected to serve on the church council at the Grace Lutheran Church. He then helped the church develop a mobile-friendly website.

“Even when he was sick, he was pushing me to get that website down,” Christell said. “I’d say, ‘Marty, I don’t have time. I need to be dealing with you right now.’ But he didn’t want that.”

He did not want people’s sympathy for his health.

In fact, Christell and Laubersheimer were in France when Morris died. And Christell said Morris kept his sense of humor till the day he died.

“Before we left (for France), we talked (Morris and I), and I said, ‘I’m going to France. I can’t just jump across the pond (to see you).’ He said, ‘Put me on ice until you get back,’ and that’s what we did,” Christell said. “In the long run, it was great for Carol (Morris’s wife). She had time to process everything.”

Christell said Carol Morris is feeling better, since her husband died. But now she is dealing with another issue.

“She says, ‘Now I know why Marty said I better die first, because I wouldn’t understand anything he did with the finances,’” Christell said. “She’s getting it all put together.”

But Morris and his “warped” sense of humor will forever be missed by his students, friends, and faculty.

**“When I was dealing with a problem that I didn’t want to share with everybody, I could go and talk with Marty, so he became ... a ‘father confessor,’**

- Christell

“When I was dealing with a problem that I didn’t want to share with everybody, I could go and talk with Marty, and so he became ... a ‘father confessor,’” said Christell. “I could go and talk to him about anything, and it would stay there, so there was a major trust level. Marty was just special that way with a lot of people. He was honest, and he had tremendous integrity with what he did.”

Morris said the following in his last sermon in May:

“No matter how alone we feel, no matter how dark the valley into which we have wandered, if we cast our eyes to the Word and realize the truth of what Jesus has wrought through the breaking of bread, we know with the surety of faith that no matter the seeming desolation in which we wander, we are not alone. ... And that is a message that resonates with all humans who face uncertainty, darkness and fear. It certainly goes for me. That is a message of hope; we are not, after all, in the Twilight Zone, but rather in the Hope Zone. For if we have faith in the promises of Christ, we will never walk our road again.”

Ryan Wilson can be reached at lamp@llcc.edu or 786.2311



## Cynthia Dipert impacted countless lives

LLCC-Taylorville developmental reading professor dies at age 66

By Ryan Wilson  
Editor

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis walked into his twin sons' second-grade parent-teacher conference at Taylorville Elementary School. He noticed a fake hand with blood dangling from the ceiling above one of his sons' desks.

"I'm reminding him (Davis's son) that he needs to raise his hand before he talks," Cynthia Dipert, the teacher of the class, told Davis and his wife, Shannon, that day.

Dipert, a teacher in the Taylorville School and adjunct developmental reading teacher at Lincoln Land Community College for 15 years, died July 17 in Memorial Medical Center at the age of 66. She always lived by the motto, "Only worry about the things you can change. Life is short. Enjoy every minute of it," as she posted on her Facebook profile.



Dipert posted a picture on her Facebook page in 2010 of her and her husband in Quito, Ecuador.

Photo courtesy Dee Krueger

Dipert was a graduate of the University of Illinois at Springfield who enjoyed science, traveling, lighthouses, making new friends and especially making people smile and laugh.

She would use her humor in her reading and science classes, as noted above with the fake hand example.

Dipert believed students learned better when they asked questions.

"She was a perfect fit (for Lincoln Land)," said Marcy Durben, an administrative assistant at LLCC-Taylorville. "She challenged her students with a firm – but encouraging – hand. Her sense of humor and smile were contagious. Many times we would answer phone calls from her, and we heard, 'Hi, this is your P.I.T.A. (pain in the ass) again.'"

But Durben said Dipert called herself this phrase. She was, in fact, the opposite.

"As a developmental teacher, she inspired students and deeply cared

about their success," said Dee Krueger, an assistant director at LLCC-Taylorville who knew Dipert for 15 years. "I will certainly miss her."

She is not the only one who will miss her. Dipert made an impact on so many lives, including her students and colleagues.

"She made an impact in my life that she may have never known," Davis said, while giving a memorial speech on the floor of the House of Representatives on July 30.

Davis, who was originally from Des Moines, Iowa, moved to Taylorville 37 years ago. He said he was a shy second-grader who was afraid to talk with anyone.

But despite this, Dipert, who was working in his classroom, helped him out of his shell by talking to him one-on-one. She knelt down on her knees beside his desk to welcome him to the class.

"That confidence Mrs. Cynthia Dipert gave me that day, was confidence that built up throughout my elementary school, junior high and high school," Davis said. "Maybe that gesture of compassion Cynthia gave me that day helped lead me here to this great institution we call the House of Representatives."

Dipert, though, treated everyone with respect.

"I remember calling her Cindy and being informed she was not Cindy. She was Cynthia. She said it was as if she was princess. And I thought, 'Oh, boy!'" Krueger said, reflecting on the first time she met Dipert. "But over the years, that first observation was farthest from the truth. Cynthia was full of life, kind, thoughtful and quite humorous at times."

She was also known for "lifelong learning," a contagious smile and her fashion.



Cynthia Dipert (front) and her husband Jim Dipert (back)

Photo courtesy Marcy Durbin

"She had a fashion sense beyond compare," said Durben, whose children were students in Dipert's class at Taylorville Junior High. "We (my colleagues and I) joked with her about never seeing her in the same outfit twice."

She will definitely be missed by all the people she touched.

Ryan Wilson can be reached at [lamp@llcc.edu](mailto:lamp@llcc.edu) or 786.2311

## Meet the New Faculty

Lincoln Land Community College hired the following new employees

### Administrative Staff

■ Todd McDonald was hired as vice president of Administrative Services on May 27.

■ Janelle Murphy was hired as program director of Associate Degree Radiography on June 2.

■ Lorie McDonald was hired as director of LLCC-Litchfield on Aug. 1.

■ Jamie Stout was hired as director of Community Education on Aug. 11.

### Professional Staff

■ Jessie Blackburn was hired as academic success professional on Aug. 18.

■ Samuel Bras was hired as systems administrator on June 9.

### Classified Staff

■ Dawn Townsend was hired as administrative assistant to the dean on June 2.



Todd McDonald



Murphy



Blackburn



Bras



Townsend



Frazier



Ogden



Collier



Johnson



Kujawa



Humphrey



Chvala



Burger

■ Adrienne Frazier was hired as education service representative on June 2.

■ Dave Ogden was hired as mechanical maintenance technician on July 1.

### Staffing changes

Lincoln Land Community Col-

lege announced several employees moving to different positions at the college.

■ Lisa Collier has moved to associate vice president of enrollment services on May 1. Collier previously served as assistant vice president of financial aid.

■ Leslie Johnson has moved to assistant vice president of student success on June 2. Johnson previously served as the director of LLCC-Litchfield and Hillsboro.

■ Dr. Tricia Kujawa has moved to director of institutional effectiveness on June 2. Kujawa previously

served as director of placement and testing.

■ Tim Humphrey has moved to dean of Arts & Humanities on July 1. Humphrey previously served as professor of education.

■ David Pietrzak has moved to program director of aviation on August 1. Pietrzak previously served as aviation mechanics training specialist.

■ Linda Carman has moved to custodial supervisor on July 1. Carman previously served as building custodian.

■ Sandra Chvala has moved to assistant to the dean on July 1. Chvala previously served as program assistant.

■ Michelle Burger has moved to student engagement coordinator on July 1. Burger previously served as student events coordinator.

■ Stephanie Cummings has moved to placement and testing coordinator on July 1. Cummings previously served as placement testing specialist.