



GIFTS & GIVERS

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE FOUNDATION

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Robert and Winette Odom Fund Scholarship for New Bean Center

Students at the new Lewis "Red" Bean Nassau Technical Career Center will already have the lifelong advantage of professional training. Thanks to Robert and Winette Odom, some of them will also have help paying for it.

The Odoms' \$109,000 scholarship donation was in the form of stock from Robert's former company, held since before his retirement 15 years ago. The gift is eligible for a state match, doubling its value.

The Fernandina residents, who lived there before and after Robert's career led them to raise a family in Minnesota,

were familiar with the College but the Bean Center held a special appeal for them.

Robert thanks the Bean Center's namesake for some of his success. Upon learning Robert and another senior were a credit short of high school graduation — and no courses available to supply it — the shop teacher, Mr. Bean, gave up his planning period and tailored a special class to meet the requirements. Both students were able to graduate on time.

Winette, a fifth-generation Floridian and longtime community volunteer, added

that they support programs that benefit children and families.

"That's where our heart is," she said. "We have been so blessed. We always try to put back."

Robert agreed.

"What we had in mind for the scholarship was to give it to married people who were displaced in their jobs," he explained. "Maybe this will help keep a family together."

The Odoms are also allowing the College to select other students in need, as long as they attend the Bean Center.



Above, The Bean Center recently opened at the Betty P. Cook Nassau Center of Florida Community College. The center represents a collaboration between Nassau County public schools and the College, and students from both may attend. Programs count for certification or degrees in carpentry, emergency services and medical assisting, computers and business. An electrical lab and culinary program will be added soon; Right, Robert and Winette Odom in their Fernandina home.



Ricco Casanova is Cooking Up a Sizzling Future

To Silver Ricco Casanova, life is a recipe. It requires a mix of ingredients in the right measure, with a dash of passion from the chef.

His father was a professional chef, working in Cuba and the United States, and from him, Ricco discovered the magic of cooking.

"When I was a little kid, I watched him take a frozen hunk of something and turn it into something wonderful," he said. "I wanted to become the person who does that."

Ricco worked in restaurants before joining the Navy, and soon realized he preferred them to the structured environment of the military.

"In my culture, the kitchen is the center of things — the good times, the people, the company," he said. "The biggest pleasure for me is the reaction from people, the 'oohs' and 'ahs.'"

After seven years of service, Ricco was honorably discharged when his Navy contract expired in March of last year, and the Montgomery G.I. Bill

pays his tuition. Textbooks, uniforms, the set of knives each student in the program must purchase, housing, transportation, and other expenses are not paid. For part of these, the 3.91 GPA student relies on financial aid and scholarships.

Like many students, Ricco has a family, including a baby daughter. Without his scholarship, he would have to quit the program and work full-time.

"The scholarship definitely is essential," Ricco said. "To be a successful student, you have to have a balance of commuting, attending school, work,

volunteer, and family time."

Ricco's recipe for success also includes clear goals. The first is to complete the two degrees he is pursuing, in Restaurant and Culinary Management. He hopes to intern at the Ritz Carlton at Amelia Island. After that, it's off to Florida International University in Miami, where Florida Community College has an articulation agreement, for his bachelor's degree. Finally Ricco plans to return to Jacksonville and open his own Latino-themed restaurant.

Culinary Arts Instructional Program Manager Bob Mark, left, and scholarship recipient Ricco Casanova in the newest kitchen at the College's North Campus.



Culinary Students Select from a Diverse Career Menu

Ricco Casanova's future is as bright as he envisions, according to William "Bob" Mark, instructional program manager for Culinary Arts.

"Students never have a problem finding a job because there are more jobs than there are qualified people to fill them, and having a degree makes it even easier," Mark said. "The problem is choosing which one."

Starting pay is \$9 to \$10 per hour, he said, but no one works only a 40-hour week. Over \$30,000 per year at entry level is typical, and with increasing experience comes

"Students never have a problem finding a job... The problem is choosing which one."

increased pay. For example, a chef for a national catering company with the PGA Tour could make over \$60,000 within five years.

Mark, himself a former restaurant executive who moved to Jacksonville with the Victoria Station chain after previous relocations to San Francisco and New Orleans, said the variety of options in the hospitality industry is nearly unlimited.

"If you work for a chain, you can move around the world," he said. "You can start out in one field and easily move to another, such as catering or food and beverage manager. There are just so many different ways to go."

Cruise lines, casinos, bed and breakfast inns, and hotels also employ hospitality workers. And

Mark said many offer good benefits and profit-sharing, so workers can own stock or part of the restaurant.

The program requires two 300-hour internships in different areas, with students working 20 hours per week. Scholarships help many to make it through.

"Although the program is inexpensive compared to many others, we have students who can't continue because of family obligations," Mark said. "The scholarships do make a difference for students with financial needs or as a reward to those who have been academically successful. Plus, there is less debt incurred before graduation, and that is a good start."

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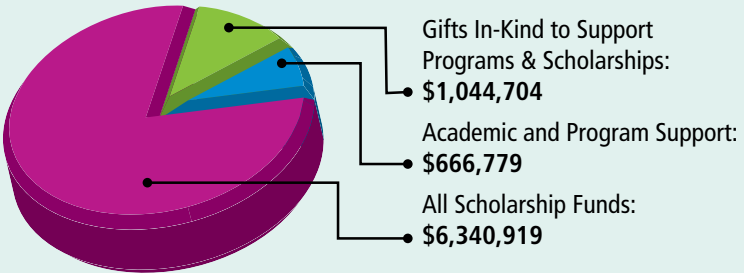
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Total: \$8,052,402

Figures as of 9/29/06

Foundation Board Welcomes New Student Representative

When Willie Brown III, the new student representative on the Foundation board, tells freshmen how to succeed in college, they should listen. After all, Brown learned himself the hard way.

A 2002 graduate of Jones High School in Orlando, Willie enrolled at Tallahassee Community College, planning to follow his five brothers and sisters to Florida A&M University. But he was soon overwhelmed, with too many friends, too many distractions, and not enough attention to his studies.

He returned to Orlando but found many of his old high school friends adrift. Willie resolved to start again, moving to Jacksonville to live with his brother, becoming an administrative associate in admissions at St. Vincent's Medical Center Emergency Department, and enrolling at Florida Community College.

Willie, like many of the Florida Community College students he represents on the board, is a scholarship recipient.

"I'm really proud of myself now," Willie said. "I went through some things that made me mature and grow and I realize that everyone doesn't have the opportunity to get an education."

Although both being an Ambassador — leading campus tours for potential students and their parents, and mentoring students in prep courses — and serving on the board require a number of volunteer hours, Willie said they are worth it.

"You never know who you'll meet that will help you get to the next level, or open a door that wouldn't be open to you," he said. "The main thing is to try to do something. I told them, 'Give me the chance and I'll make the most of it.'"

After Willie completes his associate's degree next year, he plans to pursue a bachelor's in health care administration at the University of North Florida.



North Campus Ambassador and Foundation Board Student Representative Willie Brown III

"Give me the chance and I'll make the most of it."

New District Board of Trustees Officers Named

Florida Community College recently announced its 2006-2007 Board of Trustees:

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New Faces in the Foundation Office



**Foundation Executive Director
Dr. Susan Chappell, left:** *"We're trying to be everything our community needs us to be;"*
**Director of Annual Giving
Stephanie McLeod, right:** *"There's so much potential out there."*

Dr. Susan Chappell is New Executive Director

Visitors will notice some changes in the College's Foundation Office, starting at the top. Dr. Susan Chappell is Executive Director, replacing Dr. William Mason, who is still very involved with the Foundation, now as Vice President of Community and Economic Development.

Chappell, formerly Executive Dean of Kent Campus, said the Foundation has several areas of emphasis. Distributing funds is paramount.

"First, we must make scholarships known and available to those who need them," she said. And since there is never a shortage of students trying to improve their lives with education, the next step is equally important.

"We are always looking to expand the donor base," she said. "There is a constant push to grow the

Fund Prosperity When You Pay Your JEA Bill

JEA customers will find a new option on their utility bills. They will be able to help support education on a monthly basis.

The Prosperity Scholarship Fund provides college scholarships to financially challenged potential students with the academic skills to enter and succeed in college. Any graduate of a Duval County high school or any JEA customer is eligible to apply for the scholarship, which can be used at Florida Community College, University of North Florida, Jacksonville University, or Edward Waters College.

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Foundation and invite as many people as possible to contribute funds for scholarships."

Her new role is to facilitate and focus on the larger goals, she said.

"I keep the team together and help accomplish all our goals," Chappell said. "We're trying to be everything our community needs us to be."

Stephanie McLeod is Director of Annual Giving

She might be new to Jacksonville but Stephanie McLeod, Director of Annual Giving, is a fifth-generation Floridian, born in Homosassa. She is also no stranger to college fundraising, previously serving as coordinator of major gifts at the University of West Florida in Pensacola.

McLeod is charged with both the faculty and staff annual giving campaign, as well as new efforts to launch an alumni association. Such an organization could benefit the College in many ways, she said.

"It's a grassroots effort" McLeod said, "and there's great potential for such an opportunity."

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Jacksonville, Florida 32202-4030

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