



Legacy Scholar Recognized

Kalyn Renee King, a first-year student at Virginia Highlands Community College, has been named the Washington County Moose Family Center 2010-2011 Commonwealth Legacy Scholar.

A graduate of John Battle High School, Kalyn was a member of the National Honor Society and a Washington County Community Scholar. She has been an active volunteer at Greendale Elementary, the Washington County Food Pantry, and the Southwest Virginia 4-H Educational Center. As president of her local 4-H Chapter, she organized volunteers to provide assistance at a local nursing home and help organize 4-H Camp activities.

Kalyn is enrolled in VHCC's General Studies program.

The Commonwealth Legacy Scholarship Program began in 2006 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Virginia's community colleges. These merit-based scholarships are named for those who make a community college experience available to generations of deserving students.

The VHCC award honors Kalyn's academic excellence and the Washington County Moose Family Center for its generous contributions to the VHCC Educational Foundation.

Kalyn and Commonwealth Legacy Scholars from throughout Virginia were honored during a recent luncheon in Charlottesville.

Richard Leigh Wins National Alumni Award

Richard Leigh, a 1973 graduate of Virginia Highlands Community College whose songwriting talents have earned him a Grammy Award and eight No. 1 hits on the country music charts, has been selected to receive the 2011 Outstanding Alumni Award from the American Association of Community Colleges.

Leigh is among five community college alumni from across the nation who will receive the award in April during the AACC's 2011 Annual Convention in New Orleans.

"As a songwriter, I have had the good fortune to receive awards for my ability to create intangible property," Leigh said. "This is the first time in my life I am to be recognized with such an award for making a tangible difference. This to me is as good as it gets."

A northern Virginia native, Leigh came to Abingdon in 1971 to visit a friend and ultimately enrolled at VHCC. His talents earned him a starring role in several VHCC theatre productions and an Associate's Degree in Theatre Arts. Following graduation from VHCC, he completed a bachelor's degree at Virginia Commonwealth University and then headed to Nashville.

His first big break came in 1975 when Crystal Gayle recorded "I'll Get Over You," a song that quickly reached No. 1 on the country music charts and earned a Country Music Association "Song of the Year" nomination. The following year, Leigh won both a Grammy and a CMA award for "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue," a song that was later named one of the 10 most performed country songs of the 20th century by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP).

During his distinguished career, Leigh has written eight No. 1 hits and 14 songs that have reached the Top Ten. He was inducted into the Nashville Songwriter's Hall of Fame in 1994 and his songs have been recorded by country music greats like Don Williams, Steve Wariner, Mickey Gilley, the

Dixie Chicks, and Reba McEntire. In August 2009, Billy Dean released a collection of songs entitled "Billy Dean Sings Richard Leigh."

In addition to his professional accomplishments and national recognition, the AACC award recognizes Leigh's philanthropic contributions, which include

VHCC benefit concerts in 2008 and 2009 to honor the two faculty members who first recognized his musical talents. His leadership with the Keysey-Aday Theatre Campaign raised over \$100,000 to provide student scholarships and support the arts on the VHCC campus.

"When I trace any of my professional or personal successes back to their beginnings to see what in the world made them possible, the result is always the same: I recall myself as a young man walking through the doors of VHCC for the very first time," he said.

VHCC President Ron Proffitt congratulated Leigh, adding "We are so pleased that the AACC has chosen to include Richard among the elite few who will receive this prestigious award. He has never failed to acknowledge the support and encouragement he received on the VHCC campus, and we are sincerely proud to claim him as one of our own."



Freedoms Celebrated, Veterans Honored

What is freedom?

LTC James Blevins posed this question as he saluted the members of America's armed forces during a Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 11.

"Freedom is more than not being in prison," LTC Blevins said. "Freedom is more than driving a car, or taking a vacation, or being able to choose your place of residence, or attending a sporting event. People in totalitarian regimes have, for the most part, been able to do the equivalent of all that."

Americans enjoy greater freedoms, LTC Blevins pointed out, thanks to the careful ideas included in our founding documents. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed a new era in which free people – Americans of that day and all future generations -- would govern themselves. The Constitution followed, becoming the supreme law of the land and providing the framework for the federal government.

Unfortunately, LTC Blevins said, many Americans do not understand these guaranteed freedoms or appreciate the price paid by service members for more than 200 years.

"What must we do to preserve our freedom?" he asked. "Always remember and give honor. Always remember the hero who placed his/her life on the line in the name of freedom. Keep the sacrifices forever engraved on America's consciousness ... We must forever honor our service members with our thoughts, our prayers, words of encouragement and our support."

LTC Blevins attended VHCC before transferring to ETSU, where he earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology. He is commander of the Tennessee Army National Guard's 3rd squadron of the 278th Armored

Cavalry Regiment, and recently returned from his second deployment as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

While in the Middle East, LTC Blevins said he was touched by the emotions of the Iraqi people.

"I can attest that the Iraqis want freedom and are better off today than in the past," he said. "I was there during the first free national election and saw men and women dancing in the street, displaying their blue voting finger. I saw the look of new hope and new freedom in their eyes. That is something I will never forget and never take for granted."

No American should take their freedoms for granted, he said, or should ever miss the opportunity to thank our nation's veterans for their service to our country.

"We honor our veterans, especially our fallen comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice," he said. We honor all of those who return with missing limbs, and all who may never come home. We honor the parents who have lost a son or daughter, and all children who must grow up without a parent.

"We honor the thousands of lives that changed forever in the seconds it took for a grenade to explode or a sniper to pull a trigger. We give them honor, because nothing we can do or say will ever repay such sacrifice."



VHCC News is produced each month by Anne Dunham of the Office of Institutional Advancement. If you would like to suggest information for the newsletter, please send your ideas to adunham@vhcc.edu or contact her by phone at 276-739-2456. VHCC is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.

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Student Government Association News

Members of the Student Government Association recently attended the 2010 Student Leadership Conference in Richmond, where they attended a workshop that focused on techniques for encouraging student input. They learned that they can generate more interest by truly listening to the ideas of others and making everyone feel as though his/her opinion counts. SGA members attend the conference each year to polish leadership skills and learn from their peers across the state.

SGA leaders will soon be using the proceeds from recycled cans and bottles to periodically buy refreshments for students. The effort is aimed at getting students more involved in campus-wide recycling efforts, said SGA Publicity Officer Kaitlynn Clark. To get involved, simply drop your empty cans and bottles in one of the designated recycling bins located throughout campus. An email will be sent to students when free drinks are distributed.



Handel's Messiah

Dec. 7 at 7:30 p.m. at Abingdon United Methodist Church
Tickets are available at the door for \$4

Back by popular request: The annual VHCC Christmas Concert will be another very special performance of Handel's Messiah, featuring many current and alumni choir members and Madrigal singers. The composition is Handel's most famous and among the most popular works in Western choral literature. It includes the famous "Hallelujah Chorus." The choir, directed by Beth Smith, will be accompanied by harpsichord, string orchestra, trumpet, oboe, and timpani.



Keyser-Aday Theatre Dedicated

Friends and supporters of William Van Keyser and Gary Aday gathered Nov. 7 to officially dedicate the Keyser-Aday Theatre at VHCC. The effort was community driven and recognized the two faculty members, who have led the Theatre Arts Program at VHCC since the early 1970s. The effort included a fund-raising campaign that secured more than \$100,000 to provide student scholarships and support the arts on the VHCC campus.

Winter Safety Reminder Issued

The Human Resources Department has issued these winter safety reminders that can prevent injury in wintry conditions when ice, snow and sleet is present:

- Use small steps.
- Use handrails when available.
- Use smooth walking motions.
- Stretch daily to improve flexibility and reduce stiffness associated with cold weather.
- Wear shoes appropriate for the weather.
- Always stay aware and alert. Avoid doing other tasks such as texting or talking on the phone when walking.
- Scan the path ahead for obstructions or hazards.
- Always look forward and establish sure footing with each step. Try to choose a path that is level and stable.
- Be especially careful while walking in wet conditions, at night, or on a sloping surface.
- Be sure that your view is not obstructed by objects being carried.
- Be aware that walking-related injuries often occur when rushing or taking shortcuts.



Pictured on the left are members of the VHCC Wolves Basketball Team.

Front Row (L-R) Josh Landis (12); Travis Ferguson (40); Eric Mefford (10); Jared Walls (34); Micah Thomas (32)

Back Row (L-R) Brad Chapman, Assistant Coach; Andrew Arrington (22); Justin Daugherty (14); Ryan Tayloe (52); Nathaniel Tayloe (42); Daniel Booher (30); and Tony Williams, Head Coach.