

BC3 Education Foundation adds 3 community leaders as directors

July 6, 2020



Three new directors on the Butler County Community College Education Foundation's board are shown in front of the Heaton Family Learning Commons on BC3's main campus in Butler Township on Monday, June 29, 2020. From left, Gary Rauschenberger, of Center Township, Butler County, a retired vice president with First National Trust Co., Hermitage; Carol Achezinski, of Evans City, senior vice president of preferred corporate services at NexTier Bank, Butler; and Tom Martin, of Butler, owner of Martin Funeral Home, Butler.

(Butler, PA) There are even new medical school graduates earning high salaries who are unable to purchase a new car because of the weight of student loans, a new director with the Butler County Community College Education Foundation told his incredulous engineer- and veterinarian-minded middle-school-aged children who were unaware that higher education can often come with life-changing costs.

That father, Tom Martin, a Butler County business owner, joins current and retired bank executives as the latest community leaders who will offer expertise as directors of the BC3 Education Foundation, whose named scholarships are a factor in 70 percent of BC3 graduates being debt-free.

Martin, Carol Achezinski and Gary Rauschenberger join 16 others with the BC3 Education Foundation, which acquires and manages private funds to support BC3's mission, goals, activities and programs. The foundation funds student scholarships, technology enhancements and capital projects such as the Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health Building planned for BC3's main campus.

"They all bring unique areas of interests and expertise," said Ruth Purcell, executive director of the BC3 Education Foundation. "Tom is a business owner, Carol certainly has banking and community experience, and Gary's financial skills are incredible."

Martin, of Butler, owns Martin Funeral Home, Butler. Achezinski, of Evans City, is senior vice president of preferred corporate services at NexTier Bank, Butler, and Rauschenberger, of Center Township, retired as a vice president with First National Trust Co., Hermitage.

Martin and Achezinski are among four BC3 Education Foundation board members who attended BC3, along with Tony Shakely, of Butler, commercial lending officer at Armco Credit Union; and Joseph E. Kubit, a Cabot attorney who serves as an ex-officio director and is also chairman of BC3's board of trustees.

Achezinski served on the BC3 Education Foundation board from 2011 through 2019, and as its chair from 2013-2019. Shakely is the current chair and Rauschenberger will become treasurer.

Scholarships awarded by the BC3 Education Foundation "help to offset what would have been out-of-pocket expenses" for students, said Rauschenberger, formerly an ex-officio member with the foundation's finance committee.

"It's just easier to get started in life when you are not buried in a mountain of debt," Rauschenberger said. "That's where the community college can really play a very important part in a post-high school education."

Enrolling at a college can bring a "huge financial debt to so many students," Achezinski said. "Our offering them the scholarships helps to get them on the right path, allowing them possibly not to have debt they would have had if they initially went to a four-year college."

BC3's affordable tuition, financial aid and scholarships enable 70 percent of BC3 graduates to be debt-free – as was Martin's eldest daughter, Allison, who earned an associate degree in early childhood education (Pre K-4) from BC3 in 2012.

Martin's son Brodie, 13, wants to become an engineer and his daughter Kamryn, 11, a veterinarian. Neither understood their career plans could come at a cost during a conversation with their father around the family's kitchen island a week ago.

"I said, 'You have to pay all that debt back after you graduate,'" Martin said. "'It takes years.' I said, 'There are doctors who graduate who can't afford to buy a car. They have a medical degree but they have so much money that they owe.'"

“It was a learning moment for them, that’s for sure,” Martin said. “They didn’t quite grasp the cost of higher education.”

In addition to Achezinski, Kubit, Martin, Rauschenberger and Shakely, the BC3 Education Foundation’s directors include Nancy Hunter Mycka, Valencia, executive vice president, Hunter Truck, who serves as board vice chair; Jay Shaffer, Butler, financial professional, J.G. Shaffer Financial, who serves as secretary; Arthur H. Aronson, Renfrew, retired president, Allegheny Teledyne; Cathy Bronder, Butler, community volunteer; Kelly Giles, Butler, owner, Butler Business Systems; Jeannie Gilkey, Butler, manager, Northwest Bank; and Cathy Glasgow, president, Butler County Ford.

Directors also include Robert Hovanec, Wexford, retired president and chief operating officer of Peoples TWP and retired senior vice president and chief financial officer of the Peoples Service Co.; David C. Huseman, Butler, BC3 professor of humanities and social science; John Lewis, Butler, president and chief executive officer, Armstrong County Memorial Hospital; Dr. Nick Neupauer, president, BC3, who serves as an ex-officio director; Martin J. O’Brien, Butler, retired Butler County judge; and James A. Taylor, West Sunbury, retired attorney.