

Former state Sen. Shaffer donates \$1M to BC3

Feb. 21, 2018



Dr. Nick Neupauer, left, president of Butler County Community College, is shown Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2018, with Tim Shaffer, of Prospect, after BC3 announced it had received a \$1 million commitment from the retired district judge and former state senator. Shaffer's gift will benefit BC3's registered nursing program, create The Shaffer School of Nursing and Allied Health and help to fund BC3's proposed \$10 million state-of-the-art nursing and allied health facility.

(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College on Wednesday announced a \$1 million gift from former state Sen. Tim Shaffer, one that will benefit what he calls the college's "premier" registered nursing program and that will create The Shaffer School of Nursing and Allied Health.

Shaffer, of Prospect, a retired attorney and retired district judge, served 16 years as a state senator in Pennsylvania's 21st district, which includes the city of Butler and Butler Township.

His gift, combined with a \$1 million donation from Janice Phillips Larrick in September, will facilitate the expansion of BC3's highly competitive registered nursing program, according to Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3's president.

The donations will help to fund a proposed \$10 million state-of-the-art nursing and allied health facility whose skills laboratories, simulated hospital rooms and architectural accoutrements will mirror those found in high-tech healthcare settings, Neupauer said.

With Shaffer's donation, BC3 will establish The Shaffer School of Nursing and Allied Health, to be located within the proposed Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health Building planned for the south side of BC3's main campus in Butler Township, Neupauer said.

The \$1 million donations from Shaffer and Larrick follow those of John L. Wise and family in September 2016 and of Robert R. Heaton in July 2014.

People claim BC3 as their own, president says

The spate of donations to BC3 are both remarkable and reflect convictions that BC3 excels in its mission as the community's college, Neupauer said.

"People claim this institution as their own," Neupauer said. "I feel it. I sense it."

BC3, Shaffer added, "represents the future. The future are the people who live here. The people who live here need to be educated."

The series of \$1 million gifts to the BC3 Education Foundation are the largest in BC3's 52-year history.

"Others elsewhere must be looking at BC3 and saying, 'Wow, what are those people doing down there?'" Shaffer said.

Said Ruth Purcell, the BC3 Education Foundation's executive director: "People see that other people with a credibility level are supporting the college. It's amazing how many people say, 'I earned my associate degree at BC3.' We just touch so many lives."

The gift from Wise and family was used to fund the \$2.3 million Amy Wise Children's Creative Learning Center, which opened in January. Heaton's commitment was used to fund what became the \$6.4 million Heaton Family Learning Commons, which opened in August 2016.

"I have seen how money can really go for good things," Shaffer said. "It can go for good things."

"They are busting out of their space"

The proposed nursing and allied health facility will permit the expansion of BC3's registered nursing program, one that Patty Annear, dean of nursing and allied health, says can currently accept only 70 of its more than 200 applicants a year.

“They need better space,” Shaffer said of the program, located within BC3’s Business and Health Professions Building. “They are busting out of their space. Registered nursing is one of BC3’s premier endeavors, and they should have a little more distinction.”

BC3’s registered nursing program is distinguished by its 96 percent success rate of 2017 graduates who have sat for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses, a rate exceeding the state average of 84 percent, Annear said.

“The nursing program is definitely fulfilling its part in the community,” Annear said. “The community is endorsing it. They need it, and they like it. And they are willing to put their money into it, because we do have a reputation for the nursing.”

Registered nursing is a career choice expected to see a 16 percent increase in openings – with an estimated 440,000 more jobs – in the next six years, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. The average growth rate for other professions through 2024 is 7 percent.

“BC3 has demonstrated a solid commitment to preparing students for meaningful careers in both nursing and allied health,” said Dr. Belinda Richardson, BC3’s vice president for academic affairs. “I believe this speaks to our being the community’s college. Occupational reports show that there is a real need for registered nurses and healthcare professionals as evidenced by natural growth of the region. BC3 keeps this in mind.”

Shaffer: Nursing a job “they can be very proud of”

Shaffer’s parents – John and Jean Kaufman Shaffer – created the first scholarship at BC3, in memory of Tim’s only sibling, brother Stephen, a member of BC3’s inaugural class in fall 1966. Stephen, a Navy veteran and BC3 business administration student, was killed in an automobile crash at age 23 in 1967.

The John Stephen Shaffer Memorial Scholarship was established in 1967 and its fund has grown to nearly \$100,000.

Shaffer’s father, a Butler County commissioner who served on BC3’s board of trustees, died in an automobile crash at age 56 in 1968.

Tim Shaffer, a lieutenant in the Army during the Vietnam War, served five years as a district judge in Slippery Rock following his nomination by Gov. Ed Rendell in 2011.

“I love my parents, and I have never done anything publicly to acknowledge them,” Shaffer said of his gift to BC3. “As I get older, it is becoming more important that I acknowledge things that I never really thought about before.”

The acknowledgement of his parents through his \$1 million donation is “going to help educate the students who want a good, stable job, a respectable job, one that they can be very proud of. It all just seems to fit.”