

Alumni Honored for Their Achievements

Two alumni were recognized for their achievements at the 2025 Celebration of Excellence event on May 15.



The Distinguished Alumni Award is for an ACC Alumnus/a who has achieved a significant level of career success that is directly related to the education gained at ACC.

Burlington Fire Chief Matt Lawrence oversees a department consisting of 100 trained staff members, with 28-33 on duty at any one time; 6 fire stations; and 11 front-line fire vehicles (6 engines, 2 ladders, 1 rescue and 2 command vehicles). In 2024, the Burlington FD responded to over 10,200 calls. Matt earned an ACC diploma in Fire Protection Technology in 2001. Over time he also earned a B.S. degree in Fire Safety Engineering Technology and a Master's in Fire/Rescue Executive Leadership. After years of experience with fire departments in Burlington and Chapel Hill, Matt returned to Burlington to ultimately lead the department. Under his leadership, the Burlington Fire Department earned a Class 1 Department of Insurance Fire Protection Rating, the highest level possible. Moreover, the Burlington FD developed partnerships with ACC including a successful Firefighter/EMT Apprenticeship. Matt maintains specialized certifications with national and international fire organizations. He volunteers with many organizations and boards, and currently serves as Board President for Meals on Wheels.



The Inspiration Award is for an ACC Alumnus/a whose pathway to education and career serves as an inspiration to current students.

Ron King is the Lead Programmer and Project Manager with Alamance County Information Technology. A 2004 Alamance Community College graduate with an Associate's degree in Computer Programming, Ron also served as an ACC Foundation Student Ambassador for three years. Employed with Alamance County Government since 2005, Ron has used his skills to rise through the ranks of the IT department, becoming part of a team that maintained legacy code and created new solutions for county government processes. Along the way, he has been a leading figure in several local organizations, including Scouting (including as merit badge counselor for hundreds of Scouts over the years) and earned the Silver Beaver and Order of the Arrow Vigil Honor Awards. He was also a founding member of the ACC Alumni Council.

Announcing 2025–26 Innovation Grants

The ACC Foundation Grants Committee has awarded \$61,200 in faculty/staff innovation grants for nine initiatives in 2025–2026.

- **ACCess Tablets:** To purchase 12 tablets for students to use during supervised Veterinary Medical Technology (VMT) labs and class activities.
- **Artificial Intelligence and the Future at ACC:** To provide faculty and staff members with access to AI tools and adopt AI-powered educational and administrative technologies.
- **Employee Engagement:** To plan and implement meaningful team building events throughout the year to bolster a sense of community.
- **Food Pantry Expansion:** To expand the capacity of the existing food pantry at the main and Dillingham campuses.
- **Guided Pathways Communication Initiative:** To help faculty and staff understand and use a new strategy to help more students earn credentials more quickly.
- **Process Documentation:** To create standard operating procedures and process documentation for the college by purchasing specialized software.
- **Stream-Deck Performance Booster:** To purchase keyboards for CAD program and introduce students to the new advanced technology.
- **Student Activities at Dillingham:** To include students at Dillingham Center in student-related activities.
- **Summer Camp – Workforce Development:** To increase enrollment for the established, successful Workforce Development summer camps for middle and high school students.

A Note of Thanks from the Hunger Corps at ACC

At Alamance Community College, our Food Support Program – powered in part by the AmeriCorps Hunger Corps – continues to be a lifeline for students facing food insecurity.

Through hands-on support, creative wellness initiatives, and resource distribution, we are meeting basic needs and fostering dignity, resilience, and community connection. None of this would be possible without the generous support of our sponsors, donors, and community partners. Your commitment helps us feed both bodies and futures.

The Alamance Community College Foundation is one of 13 organizations partnering against hunger at ACC.



Kristina Torain, AmeriCorps VISTA representative, poses with the food pantry at the Dillingham Center, which opened in October 2024.

Truliant Foundation Awards \$5,000 Gift to ACC's Food Pantry



The Truliant check presentation included (from left): Carolyn Rhode, Executive Director of the ACC Foundation; Kristina Torain, AmeriCorps VISTA representative; Darsell Hadley, Wellness and Student Support; Jenny Brownell, Director of Wellness and Student Support; Sarah Johnson Blackwell, Program Manager of the Truliant Foundation; and Dr. Ken Ingle, ACC President.

The Truliant Foundation has awarded \$5,000 to support the needs of the food pantry at Alamance Community College's Carrington-Scott main campus in Graham. ACC also hosts a food pantry at the satellite Dillingham Center in Burlington.

"About 35 percent of our students have reported that they experience food insecurity even as they pursue their degrees and credentials. Some are working jobs to help support their families while trying to juggle their studies. That can often mean they face financial difficulties," said Kristina Torain, ACC's HungerCorp/AmeriCorps VISTA representative tasked with combating food insecurity on campus this school year.

The College has initiated other food support programs in recent years that include EZ Meals prepared by the Culinary Arts program and offered free to students in freezers around campus. But the need is so great that food donations and funding like that provided by Truliant Foundation is necessary and appreciated.

The Truliant Foundation was established to support Truliant Federal Credit Union's commitment to community and social responsibility to give back to the neighbors it serves. It elevates the "People Helping People" credit union philosophy by providing donations, grants and scholarships to the community and relief funds to employees facing unforeseen personal hardships.

Student Distress Fund Recipient Thanks Donor

Last year 54 students received ACC Foundation student distress funds to tide them over in the face of a one-time emergency situation that would have prevented them from graduating. Here is a thank you letter from one of those students:



Reece

"I recently received assistance through the ACC Foundation Student Distress program and my power bill was covered. This donation takes a great deal of anxiety away and helps to keep me going in the university transfer program. My goal is to attend Appalachian State and your generous support is a true miracle. I thank you for helping me to stay on the path I have chosen."

Letter has been edited for clarity and brevity.

New Scholarships and Funds

The following new scholarships and funds were created since the beginning of 2025:

- Chief Don Bulla Memorial Fire Academy Fund
- Homer Corn Memorial Teaching Scholarship
- Helping Industry Recruit and Educate (HIRE) fund to create a dynamic workforce pipeline for marginalized adults to acquire work ready skills and gain employment
- Hillsborough Garden Club Scholarship
- Medical Assisting Fund to support equipment and supplies for this program
- Alice O. Smith Morrow Fine Arts Scholarship
- SparkForce fund to support manufacturing-related summer camps
- Marilyn Trussell Memorial Scholarship
- Kasey Vaughans-Ward Nursing Scholarship

We are grateful to all donors who have contributed to these initiatives.

Losses in the ACC Family

We are sorry to share the following losses in the ACC family. Each of these individuals made a difference in the lives of many students.

Ruth S. Kivett passed away on January 10. She was employed at ACC from the early 1980s through early 1990s, serving as Secretary to the Dean. Ruth worked for Dr. Ben Wolverton, Dave Turnage and Dr. Ed Barnes.

Wanda Palmer passed away on January 11. She began her teaching career at TIA (Technical Institute of Alamance) in 1966, and retired after 30 years teaching in the Business Division.

Sue Jones Warren passed away on February 4. She was the widow of Richard Jones, who began teaching at TIA in 1973 and retired as Industrial Technology division chair.

Chef Marvin Kimber passed away on February 8. Chef Kimber, who taught full-time from 1974-2001 and part-time up until the present day, was named ACC Professor Emeritus in 2010.

Margaret Minor Hooper passed away on February 8. Margaret, who taught full-time from 1979-2000 and several additional years as an adjunct, was Professor Emeritus, Dental Assisting.

Kristie Tomaro passed away on April 8, and had recently been employed at ACC in the IT Department as a PC Support Specialist. Kristie was the daughter of Tony and Liz Solazzo, who retired from ACC in 2011 as Director of Financial Aid.

Charles B. Stanley, Jr. passed away on April 14. He was the night supervisor for several years in the 1990s.

Otha C. Hawkins passed away on May 20. Otha came to ACC in 1990 as an instructor in management and business administration and served in that role for over 30 years.

Glenna Hensley passed away on May 23. She was employed at ACC as a sewing and tailoring course instructor in Workforce Development where she retired. Glenna was also the mother of Beverly Huffines, employed at ACC as the Graphic Designer from 1995 - 2022.

**Make a gift in memory of
any of these individuals
by using the QR code
below or send a check to:
ACCF, PO Box 8000,
Graham NC 27253**

