It was just another race in small-town Wisconsin, one of many for which Betsy Oudenhoven would lace up her running shoes, affix her competitor’s number to her tank top, and take off into this joyful athletic mix of serenity and insanity through 26.2 grueling miles.

At this particular competition, the Fox Cities Marathon held in and around her husband’s hometown area of Appleton, the personal stakes were higher than most.

At numerous other long-distance races she’d previously run, Oudenhoven found herself in crowds well behind the start line, and take off into this joyful athletic mix of serenity and insanity through 26.2 grueling miles.

The more accurate ‘chip timing’ that is now common had yet to be in vogue. The end result back then was lost time in catch-up mode before hitting the starting stripe. The further back, the worse the start.

Oudenhoven ensured on this particular morning that the front of her big toe hugged the start line; that her head was

Dr. Betsy Oudenhoven spent more than three decades in higher education before becoming CCA’s fifth president. The road to her new post began with large-family roots in upstate New York, before moving through several states – often in 13.1- and 26.2-mile increments.

The more accurate ‘chip timing’ that is now common had yet to be in vogue. The end result back then was lost time in catch-up mode before hitting the starting stripe. The further back, the worse the start.

Only this time there was no time to waste lagging behind. Oudenhoven needed to finish this particular marathon in three hours, 45 minutes in order to qualify for Boston, one of just two marathons in the United States (along with Olympic Trials) that require a set qualifying time. And, for this 1995 race, the prize was a ticket to the 100th Boston Marathon, making the stakes even higher.

Oudenhoven ensured on this particular morning that the front of her big toe hugged the start line; that her head was
Oudenhoven

From Page 1

Above, running in a sprint triathlon in Pleasant Prairie, Ill., around July 2010. Below, celebrating with two other women who placed in their age bracket after the Joliet (Ill.) Junior College Foundation 5K Run/Walk. Late JJC president Dr. Gena Proulx is far right in that photo.

even with the sign above draped across the street.

The marathon was relatively small, so getting as close as possible was do-able.

Oudenhoven already had surmised entering that race that she could attain the official clock time necessary for Boston, if the head start for other runners was removed.

She’d certainly put in the physical work to match her mental calculations. As cross-country coach in Oswego, N.Y., a job that supplemented her higher educational duties at the state university there, the miles she logged with those women racers during their training routines was augmented by roll-out-of-bed practice runs Oudenhoven had done almost by habit.

All those crazy miles had put Oudenhoven’s body in the best possible position to succeed. But this was as much about body positioning than anything.

Bang. The gun sounded. And off she went. Oudenhoven was cruising, checking the splits in her journey against the times she had written in marker on her arm to ensure the proper pace. But then things began to look familiar – too familiar.

Wasn’t that Oudenhoven’s relatives residing in lawn chairs a few miles down the course?

Wasn’t that those same folks, again, waving and shouting encouragement, chairs moved to another prime viewing position?

Yep, it was, and the process kept repeating itself, with her family and friends seemingly able to navigate the behind-the-scenes areas as deftly as the runners did the course.

Husband Arnie, given that it was his hometown course, had his own cheering contingent of college buds, too, and by that time in their lives together knew Betsy and added its support. Well-wishes seemed to rain down with each Oudenhoven mile or two.

“Half of Wisconsin was there,” Oudenhoven recalled with a laugh. “Finally somebody that was running near me was like, ‘Who is Betsy?’

For starters, she’s the one that finished that race seven seconds under the necessary qualifying time and would eventually go on to participate in that historical Boston jaunt.

But the answer to the question runs much deeper.

“Who is Betsy?” She was the one until age 50 playing pickup basketball just for fun. She was the one just crazy enough in graduate school in Boulder, Colo., to play one season of rugby on a city-organized team, learning in the process that “drinking beer afterwards doesn’t resolve every ache and pain.”

She was a woman who managed to currently juggle full-time work, the care of two children back home, and without a sabbatical or time off, complete her doctorate over a seven-year span.

She’s also was the woman who not only inspired her own sister to run a marathon but was a guiding force behind one of her administrative assistant’s obtaining a master’s degree (and also making her own 26.2-mile competitive trek).

Who is Betsy? Another easy answer is that she’s the new permanent president at Community College of Aurora, as of mid-December.

And at the heart of it all, she’s this: a small-town girl with big-family roots from Newark, N.Y.
Sports as an outlet

Oudenhoven grew up just outside Rochester as one of six children born to Cornell graduates.

Dad Sherman worked for Mobil Chemical in its plastics division. Mom Violet stayed at home to tend to the kids. The family’s first five children – brother Sherman followed by four girls, with Betsy coming first – all were born in a relative cluster. Youngest sister Jenny is the outlier, 14 years younger than Betsy.

One of the prime tenets of the household was hard work. Everyone was expected to carry his or her own weight. Betsy took on a great deal of responsibility as babysitter, dishwasher, and, many times, family peacekeeper.

“I loved growing up in a large family. I loved it. We had a blast,” Oudenhoven said. “And it’s funny because we’re all over the country now and we’re not big phone talkers or anything. But we get along well, and growing up, all of us kind of helped out. My mother had these elaborate chore charts she would put on the refrigerator. And then she’d always have a scheme during the summer where she’d say, ‘You wanna make some money?’ – trying to provide incentive. Like, ‘If you clean the garage out, you can make 30 cents.’ And it kind of worked out, because it was hard to find places to make money.”

Newark, N.Y. in the late 1960s and early ’70s was heavily Catholic and a girl, which was indicative of the next-door neighbors had seven boys.

“Yet, as the only Bloomer sibling older than Betsy, his sheer determination when he competed rubbed off on her. "Betsy respected that," Margaret maintained.

She said it: Betsy Oudenhoven, on embracing the challenge of being named CCA’s full-time president: “Everybody was so wonderful, I heard so many nice comments, and I feel like the college has great faith that this is going to be a good thing. But along with that I do feel a little preferred her father. Everyone went along for this detour in normalcy for more than a year.

By then, Betsy was in high school, and her participation in sports graduated from small-town ‘play days for girls,’ the sixth-grade community softball league and ‘killer basketball games’ on the family hoop in Newark to more serious business.

In New Jersey, she learned to play field hockey, something she continued in college – where her Division III St. Lawrence University team eventually beat her parents’ alma mater in the state tournament during her senior year.

Oudenhoven played basketball competitively, eventually breaking away from the ‘six-man’ team games popular at the time and merging into the five-on-five, man-to-man style better known today.

Even though sports weren’t particularly valued by her parents, her efforts on the court and field managed to open the door for her siblings to experience these kinds of extracurricular activities themselves.

“She was a tomboy. There was no doubt about it,” Margaret said of Betsy. “She’s definitely not ‘girly-girl.’ To this day, she’s not ‘girly-girl.’ Her daughter took over that role. But it’s an interesting combination, because while she’s a tomboy, she always had that motherly instinct and looked out for us.”

The peacemaking quality came in handy during family fights over who would have to sort the socks, or when sister Ellen, hardly the morning person, as a child, would yell at her siblings for chewing too loudly.

There were unspoken rules, too, relating to sports. When Margaret opted to become a cheerleader in junior high, it was immediately shunned through overwhelming peer pressure inside the house in favor of sports by the time she moved up a few grades. Competitive athletics in the end won out for all the Bloomer children, despite their parents’ attempts to broaden their horizons with side-lines like piano and ballet lessons.

Older brother Sherman played soccer and swam but was not gifted in either endeavor.

Yet, as the only Bloomer sibling older than Betsy, his sheer determination when he competed rubbed off on her. “Betsy respected that,” Margaret maintained.
Franki Morales mentors a jewelry student, as seen through the reflection on the classroom mirror.

A t four years old, Franki Morales had no idea she’d go into jewelry. But she’d already gone into jewelry.

Morales went into her mother’s jewelry box – “the good stuff,” she said – took all of it apart and then tried to put it back to no avail.

“When I was in my 20s, my mother sent it back said, ‘OK, now fix it ...’”

By then, Morales had the tools, both literally and figuratively to accomplish that job, and much more.

Her mother’s collection may have been off limits for a spell but jewelry was already engrained in her soul.

Even as a professional in the social-work arena for 25 years, she always made jewelry as a sideline.

She sold her first piece in her teens. She made pieces and sold them to co-workers.

Now, she not only teaches CCA students the finer points of making their own earrings, rings, and the like, in classes like Cold Connections (connecting without heat), Metalsmithing, Jewelry Design I and II, but visitors to museums in Denver, Greece and England can see her handiwork.

“I’m meant to do a lot of things in regards to jewelry,” said Morales, who has been at the college for 3½ years. “But I never knew the gifts I was given for teaching until I got here and students spent long-term semesters with me. I knew I could teach well. I knew people got it. I knew I could write these curriculums.”

Even as much as piecing a class together, Morales enjoys piecing together disparate objects into artwork.

Beyond that, it’s her seemingly easy bond with students that has allowed her to find her bliss.

One student in her 70s is now selling her work online and going to shows. Another was experiencing physical maladies and working with jewelry transformed her hands and allowed for movements she had heretofore been unable to apply for a lengthy period.

That makes the journey worthwhile. Yet it goes beyond that to the relationships. Sitting in her class is like a bee going from flower to flower, dropping compliments instead of honey – though she may call someone by that drippy-sweet moniker.

Morales away from the college created retreats that promote healing through jewelry. Her fundraisers for Colorado CASA, National Jewish, Catholic Charities is a clear intersection of her social-work idealism and her craft.

“I just know that there are times I’m making jewelry where I have to literally stop and put water on my face to come down because I’m totally in my realm,” she said.

Morales can remember during her upbringing in upstate New York going out, finding stones, polishing them, setting them, and making a piece. Morales would gravitate to a store with huge beer barrels filled with beads.

“I can remember as a child sticking my hands inside and just falling in love.”

Morales’ love for everything jewelry is perhaps matched only by her sheer joy around children. One of her first jobs was working at a community college with abused kids. She went into social work as an offshoot and stayed in that profession for 25 years. She was a supervisor, not out in the field, and used her abilities as a creative outlet.

The social worker mentality also is evident in her classroom, where she calls everyone by first name, starts most conversations with encouraging words, and then tries to make things better.

It’s not a dissimilar approach to a therapists visit.

“I don’t do that consciously, but that’s just how I am,” she said. “And I do see beauty.”

Morales was teaching private apprenticeships for Colorado Free University and women's groups when it was suggested she should lead classes at CCA. There were no jewelry classes when she started with a one-credit class. Morales now leads six classes.

“My first class here I had a woman in her 60s and at the end of the class, she said, ‘Did you know Franki, I was on a huge regimen of medication. I was taking care of my aging husband. I was in chronic pain every day and now I’m virtually off the meds?’ She said coming here is so therapeutic. And whether it’s a distraction and she could focus on something other than the pain, she said to me that I need to teach this in a health department to nurses because this is art therapy. And it is like therapy.”

And not just for the students. She is truthful to people and doesn’t lie about the quality of their projects. But she’s also quick with a heartfelt smile for her students and is invested in their jewelry projects turning out the best they possibly can.

“I’m doing who I am,” Morales exclaimed.
The Ninth Annual Student Success Awards were held Friday, Dec. 6, at the Rotunda to recognize students who have overcome obstacles in order to further their educations. Clockwise from top, blind student Reem Hamodi, a native of Iraq who came through Libya and Jordan on her way to the U.S.; award-winners Idaly and Rogelio De Reza, with daughter Alexandra; the Lee family, husband Kencheze Ray, student Desiree, and sons Jaevon-Julice and Kencheze Ray, Jr.; family honorees Ed and son Chris Rummel pass around the credit.
ART WITH HEART

Class aims to make a difference to folks having a down day

The CCA counseling office had a new visitor recently. Sitting on a desk, adding an ornate look to what was otherwise cedar-wood regularity, was a handmade book, sewn together by hand.

Inside, hand-scribbled drawings were accompanied by uplifting phrases that challenged depression and low self-esteem head on:

"Most of the things you worry about never happen."
"The only difference between a good day and a bad day is your attitude."
"I will not compare myself to strangers on the Internet."

The author of this book, it turns out, is CCA student Kim Huynh. The book was her assignment for Alex Girard’s 2D design class, which concluded the fall semester with an assignment that challenged students to make a difference in the lives of someone else through their art.

The approaches taken were varied. The results were surprising, in many cases.

One student stood on a street corner in Aurora with selected messages written on placards. "There’s a lot of awesome in you!" one belloved, as motorists honked horns and smiled their approval.

Another member of the class went to the local library armed with 12 different bookmarks embossed with three different sayings. She clandestinely placed these pieces of 2D art in the books of library patrons who had abandoned their reading materials.

One student opened a Twitter account entitled, #JustDropIt, with a backdrop of suicide prevention in mind. By the time he was finished, several Psychiatric agencies had become followers and re-tweeted the work, which was an assemblage of his own positive messages and those written by others.

Scott Wakefield, chair of the Art and Design Department, Girard and others often have discussed the importance of building confidence by having their students generate and execute ideas. This project afforded the possibility of changing a perspective, thought, or day of another individual in a purposeful fashion.

"It was a great way of reaching people and having an instant idea of how it affected them," said Gene Dillion, whose street-corner sign campaign also included the message, “Peace, Love, and Nachos” that had one commuter believing she was advertising for a local restaurant.

"I think the project was very effective and interesting and eye-opening to see all these creative outlets and ideas come together, all going towards the same goal of cheering people up, brightening their day, and otherwise positively influencing their lives," Dillion added. "This was a really great vehicle for that and one of the projects I’ve enjoyed most so far."

One of the more intriguing ideas came from first-year student Nicholas Kim. He drew a four-panel pencil drawing in comic form and left ‘bubbles’ for the dialogue empty. He then distributed them at class and work. Kim was stunned to find nearly all of them had been filled out – and that he had been found out as the project’s distributor.

"I told like one person, and
Oudenhoven talks about dreaming big

Accomplishments, on-going projects, and big-picture thinking all were part of the discussion at the December All-College Forum.

“We’ve got to dream big and think about what the possibilities can be,” Dr. Betsy Oudenhoven said in her first appearance at the monthly meeting as CCA’s full-time president.

One of the visions that will likely become reality early in the new year is movement of the Facilities Department into its own separate building at CentreTech.

Dr. Oudenhoven wanted staff, faculty, and administration to brainstorm ideas on how the extra space could be used in order to better serve and support students.

Even broader opportunities are potentially coming down the pike, depending on how the Joint Budget Committee adopts the Nov. 1 state budget recommendations of Gov. John Hickenlooper. A proposed $388 million increase in the general fund for education included $101 million for higher ed, with 60 percent earmarked for operations; 30 to need-based financial aid, five to work study and five to merit scholarships.

“This is a 42 percent increase in financial aid and it directly affects our students. It helps with retention. It helps with graduation,” Vice President of Administration Richard Maestas said. (That could change, given that revenue estimates from September hold until the end of the year at the state level, and they drive the decision-making process.)

Already on the fast track is a energy efficiency project that is expected to save CCA about $3.1 million over the next 15 years, which will be funded by college savings.

The college hired Siemens Corp. to conduct an energy performance audit and the sector giant said that lighting, HVAC control, water and weatherization efforts could in part produce part of the savings. Contractors will begin work Jan. 1 at CentreTech, mainly working at night and on weekends to be less intrusive in making the college more energy efficient.

Outside of fiscal matters, there is the ongoing conversation in the legislature about allowing Bachelor of Applied Science degrees, an issue driving by state Sen. Nancy Todd. Oudenhoven talked about potentially finding creative ways at CCA to merge current programs with that potential opportunity.

Numerous other topics were discussed at the All-College meeting:

- Janet Brandau, interim VP of instruction, provided an update on ongoing projects, including Perkins Grants and the potential introduction of yearlong guaranteed annual schedules with input from advising, enrollment services, chairs, deans and others.
- Liberal Arts Dean Ted Snow touched upon Developmental Education redesign and discussed the ongoing phased implementation occurring across the system and the significant progress made in-house with CCR94 and English 121. A next step will be further discussion of CCR93, which combines English and Reading requirements, and degrees of designation.
- Barbara Lindsay, head of the Strategic Planning Committee, discussed the creation of priorities and recommendations for Cabinet in the form of a mission statement, vision statement and strategic goals that will be returned to committee and then opened up to comment from college stakeholders.
- Elena Sandoval-Lucero, interim VP of student affairs, said that enrollment FTE and headcount both had dipped slightly but added that ongoing initiatives – including postcards, e-mails and face-to-face contact -- to get students already well into the CCA pipeline to register eventually could boost those figures.
- Angie Tiedeman, coordinator of the Office of Student Conduct, Intervention, and Retention, discussed the ‘refer a concern/incident button’ recently added to the front of the CCA website and went over details on filling out the accompanying report.
Oudenhoven

Sherm’s drive was exceeded only by his smarts, which was a quality embraced by his well-educated parents. Betsy was just as driven academically but always needed to balance it with athletics. Field hockey was enjoyable, but her true love was hoops.

Oudenhoven joked that because of her height, she would stand close to the basket, arms up, tasked with trying to block shots, during her early on-court experiences. She later would become a small forward – “a very small forward,” Betsy joked -- for four years at her undergraduate choice, St. Lawrence University, which played schools like Colgate and State University of New York offshoots such as Potsdam, Oswego and Plattsburgh.

The dynamics of relationships formed and camaraderie built through athletics became a driving force behind Oudenhoven’s passion for play as much as her brother’s fierce determination to compete once had.

“I was always one of those athletes that had great enthusiasm and not so much talent,” Oudenhoven maintained. “I think eventually I turned into a runner because the thing I figured out real quick is that if I could outrun everybody and keep going when everybody else was getting tired, that would give me a leg up.”

Plotting her life’s course was like navigating a road course – plenty of bumps.

At the same time, Oudenhoven would manage to carve out a relatively predictable path as she moved into a career in higher education.

But, first things first.

Rocky Mountain High

The empathy and compassion Oudenhoven demonstrated in her own home as ‘Mom No. 2’ undoubtedly would find its way into her future work as a counselor. At the same time, there was a rebellious side that needed nurturing, too. And it was that exploration that preceded her first real day jobs in higher ed.

Even after graduating from St. Lawrence, Oudenhoven still lacked a worldliness about her that many of her friends possessed. They had seen the globe, and much of the U.S., at the very least. Betsy knew rural New York like the back of her hand, yet everywhere else just in the back of her mind.

A one-way plane ticket given to her by her parents to attend Outward Bound outside Eugene, Ore., for graduation began to blur those lines. The four-week course brought more physical components to her life—mountaineering, hiking, backpacking and climbing – but, in a macro sense, was a pathway to freedom.

Betsy upon the conclusion of that outdoor litmus test jumped a ride down the coast of California to visit her brother in San Diego and ended up staying a few months. When big brother eventually gave her the boot, she headed to Boulder to see a friend who was coaching field hockey for the University of Colorado.

She would eventually board a bus back to New York. But her experiences in Colorado couldn’t be shaken easily. There was a pull to the area that was palpable, even back then. But the reality at the time was that she first needed to start a career.

Oudenhoven wound up at a ritzy, private girls school in Stephen son, Maryland, called St. Timothy’s School. Former U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale’s daughter, Eleanor,
was an attendee. Oudenhoven served as housemother for freshmen and sophomores who were boarding students. But since the job ostensibly was a night position, her days were open.

So what else was there to do but get a job on the lawn crew for the City of Baltimore?

"Me and two other woman were put in a truck together and it was a blast," Betsy recalled with a laugh.

"One of the other women was an ex-model – she was beautiful but she had gotten into drugs and had cut all her hair off and started doing landscaping. The third woman – God, I loved her – she was a belly dancer at night ..."

A housemarm, a rehabbing model and a belly dancer. Sounds like one of those clauses followed by 'walk into a bar ...' But this was no joke. Steel-toed boots, bib overalls, mulching and mowing lawns were reality.

Johns Hopkins University and local apartment complexes would be transformed from rundown to pristine in a matter of hours from the women's handiwork. The weather was nice. And not only was there the physical component Betsy loved but immediate, tangible results to the work that she enjoyed.

"We'd come back at the end of the day and I'd just be covered in muck," Oudenhoven recalled. "I'd go into the main building to get my mail and people literally would turn away. But that got old after awhile, and I realized with a bachelor's in Psychology, I didn't want to do what I was doing. It was interesting for 4-5 months, so at that point I decided I needed to go back to graduate school."

She packed her bags again and, to no one's surprise, landed in Boulder.

"It was interesting times," Oudenhoven responded. "Maybe it's just how I'm wired."

If so, the concept of finding a balance between tackling such heavy subjects and ensuring that her own mental well-being was being addressed was becoming just as engrained.

Boulder also became a place where running turned from a hobby to part of her DNA.

"Running, in particular, has been her sense of centering and finding relaxation, and if you will, her escape from the stressors of life," Betsy's husband of 31 years, Arnie, explained. "It's fundamental."

Oudenhoven remembered the excitement she would feel seeing Frank Shorter run. He still stands as the only American athlete to win two medals in Olympic marathon.

She loved traversing the hills and testing her breathing in the altitude.

Her first half-marathon occurred in Colorado and would become the first of many. Oudenhoven would graduate to about a dozen full marathons – including Boston and New York – in addition to a stint as a triathlete.

"Once I started I never stopped," Oudenhoven said. "I can remember having conversations with our cross country runners in New York (while working at SUNY-Oswego from 1988-97) about the idea of running being something I do or running being a part of who I am. And there is a point for most people where that switches to part of an identity."

Oudenhoven's first extended long-distance race was Grandma's Marathon in Mankato, Minn., where, at the time, she worked at the local university as complex director in residence life alongside Arnie. The pair had met two years earlier working both as hall directors at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

From there it was off to Oswego, where she served both as assistant to the dean of students and as assistant director of residence life and housing; into student services at Oakton Community College in Illinois; to assistant director of academic advising at Roosevelt University in Chicago; director of counseling and dean of counseling and retention at College of Lake County (Ill.); and VP of student development at Joliet (Ill.) Junior College.

Betsy and Arnie would simultaneously navigate each academic step (though Arnie would split off into human resources and Betsy student affairs), have two children, and until the 'till death do us part' promises, even run together for a short time. That was before Arnie took about a 20-year hiatus from hoofing the long miles.

"I'll tell friends that it's kind of interesting the difference between Betsy as a runner and myself," Arnie said. "When it's a new morning, she wakes up and says, 'Oh, good. It's a new day. I get to go for another run.' I wake up and say, 'Oh, my gosh. It's another day. I have to go out for another run.'"

Betsy admitted to getting antsy if she doesn't have that type of release regularly. So, even today, whether it's a spin class, yoga or a run, it's become necessity rather than just a convenient outlet.

"I really don't like going more than two or three days without exercise," she explained. "If I'm starting to stretch four to five days together, I just start feeling more tense."

Few and far between

If Betsy Oudenhoven at times is prone to that groundswell of emotion, she has an accompanying discipline and patience that is among her greatest strengths, both inside and outside a college setting.

Her sister Margaret was inspired to run a marathon after seeing Betsy cross the finish line in New York. The two ended up going 26.2 miles together a year later at the Marine Corps event in Washington, D.C. Betsy went over the training plan she adhered to on a weekly basis with her sister to ensure their joint success.

Amanda Quinn, Oudenhoven's senior administrative assistant at Joliet Junior College from 2007-2010, also
Oudenhoven

From Page 9

was encouraged to go the distance, both professionally and personally, at Oudenhoven's prodding.

Betsy not only helped her formulate a training regimen to race but helped bring out the necessary discipline to secure a master's degree, something Quinn is one semester away from completing.

"She's that person that many people can't be," said Quinn, now alumni relations and annual funds manager for the JJC Foundation. "She can manage being the boss, but she's really somebody who cares for the people that work for her. Usually there's a fine line there. But she's really good at being the person 'over you' but instilling the notion that deep down she cares about you and your family. She gets to know you. And she was the same way with students, too."

Quinn herself hadn't run more than a couple 5Ks before Betsy got in her ear. She also didn't aspire to be much more than an assistant when she joined JJC. That notion Oudenhoven quickly put to rest. She made sure Quinn was heavily involved in the organization of projects, including a 5K race that now raises about $40,000, and several others.

"When Betsy came in, she had gone through the ranks: dean in counseling; VP," Quinn explained. "She's worked her way up and is someone you can relate with. Sometimes that's difficult with people that are very academic. And even though she is academic, she's also human, you know what I mean?"

"When people are so smart, sometimes it's hard to understand them and relate to them, and she's totally not that way. She's relatable. Everyone always says you can relate to her. It's got to be her counseling background."

Part of Oudenhoven's appeal to the masses at Community College of Aurora was how humbly she took over the president's chair six months ago after serving for about two years as VP of student services.

There was no air of superiority, but, rather, an aw-shucks, thanks, let's-do-this vibe, with the sense she possessed the knowledge base behind the humble attitude to get the job done.

People seemingly are willing to go the extra mile for Betsy Oudenhoven because of that approach, and the trust inspired by her 34 years in higher education.

"One of the things that matters most to her is people. People matter," her husband noted. "How things are going to affect them, how they are impacted, that's really where she starts from. And when she has to take on people she will. But it's an intellectual thing, not a personal thing. She can make critical assessments but not be argumentative. And everyone matters to her. Everyone's important and equal in that regard."

Borne from her sporting life, Oudenhoven is about giving every ounce she has to an endeavor. But she's well aware the race isn't always easy; nor, is she above asking for help, when needed.

"With distance running it's not about the body, it's about the mind and really kind of training yourself to talk your way through it. And she's just got that really strong mind," sister Margaret said. "So if there's an obstacle, her mental self-talk tends to be pretty positive. It's not that she never has doubts. But she can overcome and rationalize in her head like no one I've ever seen. And that probably comes from the running first, that mental toughness that I'm going to overcome this obstacle. And it translates to her high-stress jobs, too. She can compartmentalize."

"It isn't that she won't feel emotion-al or the stress of situations, she'll just kind of have that and put it away and mentally self-talk about looking at the situation differently."

Oudenhoven needed a new approach after surprisingly being named to the interim president's role at CCA in July 2013. Her responsibilities were different, and perhaps the way she needed to deal with others changed slightly, too.

At the same time, she managed to endear herself to her internal and external stakeholders over the next five months by being herself. She was asked to assume the full-time presidential duties held only by four others in the college's 30-year history: Dr. Nai-Kwang Chang, Dr. Larry Carter, Dr. Linda Bowman and Alton D. Scales after a five-month trial.

Now, if she can just find the time to run out the back door, traverse the Highline Canal for a few miles in her Nikes, shower and return to her desk before anybody notices. Then, everything would be as it should be in terms of the life-work balance she craves.

Barring that, she'll have to settle for tackling her stress releivers on the side while doing whatever she can to ensure that CCA becomes what she covets; the finish line of her professional life.

So pull up a lawn chair, Aurora. It's go time.
CCA held its annual holiday bash on Dec. 16, and with the usual awards to the year’s top employees and faculty, CCA staffers shared quality family time at the college. Images from the evening are captured on the next three pages. Clockwise from left, Director of Security Jeff Simpson shares a smile with 16-month-old daughter Annabelle Elizabeth; Chris Tombari, chair of the English as a Second Language Department, imparts fatherly wisdom to son Logan; Scott Wakefield, department chair of Art & Design, has his hands full with sons Kade and Spencer.
Clockwise from right, President Betsy Oudenhoven shares a hug with Payroll Accountant Kimberly Suazo after the latter was awarded CCA’s Classified Employee of the Year Award; English and Communication faculty Brandon Feres shares a surprise moment with son Wyatt; Faculty of the Year winner James Gray, chair of the Math department, has a lighter moment with Heidi McKinnon and Cindy Hesse; Olimpia Marroquin and Coco Marial of the Concurrent Enrollment department have a post-party laugh.
Clockwise from right, Associate Director of Donor Relations Josh Gold's daughter Dylan seems captivated as introductions are made to English and Communication faculty Robley Welliver and her daughter Avocette; Math faculty Alice Gilbert makes sure that her grandson, Jaymin Wayne Larchick, gets fed before the festivities begin; Kristen Cusack celebrates her win as Exempt/Administrative Employee of the Year with an official photo. Cusack serves as registrar and director of admissions.
Community College of Aurora has received a driving simulator for use in its Emergency Medical Services, Police and Fire Academies as a donation from intergovernmental partners City and County of Denver and Denver Fire Department, helping the college further enhance its training capabilities for first responders.

“One of the biggest things you can do to put wear and tear on a vehicle is train people to drive urgently in it, so this is a really great thing to have,” said Beth Lattone, department chair for CCA’s EMS and Fire Science Technology departments.

The City and County of Denver and Denver Fire donated the driving simulator to the CCA Foundation for the benefit of the college. There no longer was space for the simulator at Denver’s joint training center. It previously was used by Denver Fire at the Rocky Mountain Fire Academy, according to the donation agreement signed by all parties.

Brand new the unit would cost about $250,000, CCA Fire Science Technology Coordinator Mark Stephenson maintained.

The simulator has two driving “seats” that will connect to a big-screen TV with software designed to mimic road conditions and potential hazards. One of the seats is equipped with a normal automatic transmission and light box setup found on a police car or ambulance; the other has a diesel framework, with parking brake and battery switch regularly used on a fire rig.

“It’s just one more opportunity we can offer to our students as far as simulation,” said Renie Del Ponte, dean of Health Sciences and Public Safety. “Whenever we can create a simulation scenario, we want to try and do that. This just allows us to expand our reality-based training even further.”

CCA already is well known nationally for its simulation capabilities. The Center for Simulation has several spaces, including house, bar, attic, industrial, elevator and high scaffolding scenes. High fidelity mannequins can mimic a simple heart attack to a woman giving birth. There are two full-sized ambulances and an ambulance box.

There is also a fully functional Emergency Operations Management Center, with Microsoft Surface tabletops, smart boards, big-screen televisions and other tools to handle wide-scale and small-scale disaster communications.

The latest addition to those technological capabilities will be set up by CCA faculty in the coming months and curriculum will be adapted to include the driving simulators for use in classrooms by the fall semester.

“Both police and fire academies use driving as aspects of training, and both are specialized skills,” Del Ponte said. “The simulators allow them to get some of that done before driving in an actual vehicle, making it an easier process to acclimate to a regular police car, fire truck or ambulance.”

CCA is mourning the loss of one of its greatest police academy instructors, Steve Emerson. Emerson, a member of the Aurora Police Department for three decades, died Dec. 29 after a lengthy battle with colon cancer. He was 63.

Emerson taught at CCA since the academy’s inception more than 20 years ago. He helped with many of the physical skills aspects of training, including self-defense and arrest control techniques, and also imparted knowledge during scenario-based exercises.

More than one thousand cadets and officers benefited from his expertise during his time as a police officer.

His son Logan was a graduate of CCA’s police academy. —

Community College of Aurora’s Art & Design Department will be hosting a scholarship symposium and competition on the Lowry Campus on Saturday, February 22, 2014.

High school seniors are eligible to win a scholarship to CCA as part of an art competition. Entrants are asked to submit a portfolio with 12-20 images of their work in a portfolio/binder no larger than 13-by-19 inches, accompanied by a printed artist statement no longer than 1,000 words.

A separate call-for-entries is being made for another art competition, with prizes and awards available to high school juniors and seniors who have the best single work in the areas of drawing, painting, photography, ceramics, sculpture, or digital art/design. All pieces must be framed, matted or otherwise gallery-ready.

Please RSVP to this symposium by February 1 by calling 303-540-7335 or e-mailing art@ccaurora.edu.

The Colorado Film School held its annual Fall Student Show in December and crowned winners in 16 different categories, with “Eff You Randall” walking away with seven awards, including best picture and the audience choice award.


Michael Carter, director of the CCA Law Enforcement Training Academy and Public Safety and Legal Studies, was sent a letter of appreciation from the TSA Associates Program and its National Program Manager, Patrese C. Roberts.

Spring 2014 will bring another TSA graduation for a second cohort of officers who have completed its contracted three Homeland Security courses at CCA. But both the first and second cohorts are answering Carter’s challenge by taking courses towards a CCA Criminal Justice AAS degree too.

Many of the TSA students don’t have previous college experience, and the result is that over 50 potential students will have taken CRJ courses as well as fulfilling General Ed requirements at the college in a multi-semester pathway.

TSA is piloting an online component of the three-course Homeland Security program on the east coast. Carter currently is attempting to pilot the same program at CCA.

Two classes in CCA’s Law Enforcement Training Academy held graduation ceremonies in December. A photo of Class 13-1 that graduated on Dec. 3 is available on Page 15 of this newsletter and includes the names of the training candidates receiving their certificates of completion.

Class 13-4 held its ceremony on Dec. 17 and the class graduates are due on April 1.

Included in the ceremony are:

Joshua M. Carter; Andrew G. Cruz; Travis C. Fleming; Dillon P. Flynn; Spencer A Grove; Myka A. Morse; Thomas O. Murphy; Valentin Oliveros; James P. Randall; Lyzzet Rason; Clinton D. Smith; Jaymar A. Thompson Filippo S. Travisany; and Rachel M. Wicks. ---

CCA once again will be a host site for Tax Help Colorado on the Lowry campus. Student- and staff-run tax help dates are Saturdays between Feb. 22 to March 22, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Contact Virginia Kar- ras at 303-825-6246 if you know anyone requiring more information.
Around campus

Clockwise from top, members of Police Academy graduating class 13-1, including Omis Christian T. Avant, Casey J. Christensen, Sean M. Clark, Austin L. Coleman, Martha P. Collier, Stacy V. Crump, Matthew C. Emmert, Evan L. Ingraham, Mark W. Kubic, Autumn M. McDole, Seath A. Nordman, Christopher C. O’Brien, Samuel J. Owensby, Justin J. Pfluger, Thomas N. Quayle, Braden A. Selby, and Adam M. String; members of the Fall 2013 Fire Academy Class, which included 14 students, including (left to right) Chris Brown, Marcus Glaspey, Joseph Chavez, Josh Colberg, Kevin Halpin, Brandon Cleri, Jairo Carrillo, Jason Tetreault, and Max Egger; members of the International Student Association and International Mentor Association during their end of semester party on Dec. 6; the Criminal Justice Courtroom beginning to take shape at the Center for Simulation, with the judge's bench, witness stand, and jury box now visible. The hope is that construction will be completed by the end of January for use in the Spring semester.