Anderson’s interim tenure begins

Strives to keep momentum going

Dr. Geri J. Anderson promised herself when she turned 50 that she would commit to doing one daring thing per month over the next year.

What followed was like a segment of “The Amazing Race”: Anderson bungee-jumped out of a hot air balloon; went sky diving; even rafted lethal Class 5 rapids on the Arkansas River, among other extremes.

Taking over as the interim president at Community College of Aurora – as Anderson did March 1 – also figures to offer its share of challenges.

At least the odds of serious injury figure to be reduced by a factor of 1,000 or more.

“T’ll tell you what it’s really about,” said Anderson, who will continue to work concurrently in her full-time job as vice president and provost for the Colorado Community College System while CCA’s nationwide search for its fourth full-time leader continues.

“I think it’s so important that I’m reminded at the policy level why we do what we do, and this really does give me an opportunity to evaluate and remember that students are the top priority and how important it is in what we do.

“So it may be a wonderful adventure,” Anderson added. “I hope it’s a wonderful adventure. And I hope in some way I’m able to contribute to CCA remaining a premier institution as we search for the perfect replacement.”

In a show of deep respect, outgoing CCA president Dr. Linda Bowman pushed hard for Anderson as the person to bridge the gap until that hire arrives on campus.

Tea with Linda

Dr. Linda Bowman’s retirement tea was held Feb. 24. Remarks by Colorado Community College System President Nancy McCallin acknowledged Bowman’s contribution to higher education policy and practice throughout, not only the state, but the country. Tearful faculty and staff reflected on memorable moments with President Bowman during her time at CCA. Dr. Bowman started her presidential term at CCA on Oct. 12, 2000.
Tax preparation has been in Lt. Gov. Joseph Garcia’s blood long before he stepped on CCA’s Lowry Campus on Feb. 17 to visit the school’s Tax Help Colorado site.

In law school, Garcia participated in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, which offers free tax filing services for needy individuals and families. His parents have since carried the banner even further, helping mainly Spanish-speaking immigrants during tax season on nights and weekends near their Arlington, Va., home.

“So it was cool to come here and see this center,” Garcia said.

On the Friday he arrived, a long line of people with household incomes of less than $49,000 were waiting for help from specially-trained CCA students and volunteers from the Piton Foundation, which organizes the statewide campaign.

CCA in 2008 was the first in the state to offer the service and in the four years since, 2,972 taxpayers received $6.33 million in refunds from 104 volunteers. This year’s Lowry site through Feb. 11 already had processed the most returns and accounted for the most refunds, whether state, federal or via Earned Income Tax Credit.

The service continues on Saturdays (9 a.m.-3 p.m.), Tuesdays (1-7 p.m.) and Fridays (noon-5 p.m.) through March 17.

“It’s clear there’s a demand,” Garcia said. “People don’t know how to do this and they want help. It really benefits communities, because it brings dollars into the communities. And I think it really connects folks in a really positive way with financial institutions and learning about the importance of getting a relationship with a bank, beginning to invest in the future and thinking about how to plan their expenses and revenues as they build a business.

“A lot of these folks have small independent businesses, whether it’s lawn care or as domestics. But they’re eligible for their earned income tax credit. They just don’t know how to access it. The training it provides to the students also is important.”

Garcia used to attend meetings next door to the Lowry main entrance at the Colorado Community College System offices as president of Pikes Peak Community College.

“They were in the process of the remodel here,” he recalled. “To see if repurposed for this, for these months, is huge.”

CCA’s Tax Help Impact

- CCA first to offer the program upon its 2007 launch as pilot site.
- Since Tax Help Colorado site operations began on January 28, running through Feb. 11, CCA had processed the largest number of returns (439) and accounted for the most refunds whether federal ($1.027 million), state ($113,153), Earned Income Tax Credit ($434,175) or total ($1.140 million).
- Last year, 17 community colleges, JUCOs and the University of Colorado were part of the Tax Help program and in total processed 5,816 returns with $10.528 million in refunds returned to taxpayers.

Non-violent paths of icons are explored

“Soul force is more powerful than body force.”

“Stand up with all you have in you and determine to not use violence in any way.”

“Live without hatred, especially towards enemies.”

It would be hard to distinguish whether these powerful words were spoken by Mahatma Gandhi in the early part of the 20th century, Martin Luther King in the turbulent 1960s or Aung San Suu Kyi in more modern times.

Yet that was the central point of a panel discussion on the religious roots of non-violent social action, held Feb. 22 at Community College of Aurora.

All three cultural icons came from divergent circumstances in places far removed globally. But King borrowed from Gandhi, and Suu Kyi from them both in trying to establish social reformation and political change in their times.

One was Baptist. One Buddhist. One Hindu.

They shared a common message for establishing peace in their times despite ethnic and religious differences.

“They were simply doing something that they deeply believed in,” said Dr. Anne Dondpati Allen, an adjunct professor at the University of Denver and Johnson and Wales University, who presented Suu Kyi’s background to a large crowd at CCA’s Student Centre Rotunda.

“(Suu Kyi) said she did this because she couldn’t be indifferent to what was going on.”

Gandhi eventually helped overturn colonialism in India and unjust laws in South Africa by leading people to draw strength from within themselves and collectively as a nation. It eventually cost him his life at the hands of an extremist as Hindus and Muslims waged war.

“Gandhi compared truth to a leaf on a tree with many different leaves,” said Dr. Aaron D. Conley, who teaches courses in faith in Justice at Iliff School of Theology and Regis University and is an expert on Gandhi’s life. “It’s where the idea of not doing any harm emanated.”

Rev. Dr. James D. Peters, Jr. was part of King’s inner circle as King’s representative in Connecticut of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He recalled MLK presenting three ways to deal with oppression: to do nothing; rise up with physical violence against the perpetrators of evil, which he considered immoral and impractical; or to “wear you down with the capacity to love you and not only win my freedom but win you within the process.”

“He stayed true to that. It permeated the Civil Rights movement,” Peters, Jr. said.

King knew he would die for his cause, and did by an assassin’s bullet, yet “the mission had to go forward and the mission was more important than his own life,” Peters, Jr. added.
“Those things that are in progress, we will continue to make progress and bring some of them to completion. We will begin talking about the CCA (that) people want for the future, just in preparation for the new president. And so, certainly, we will continue to move forward.”

Among the items on the docket in the coming months are continuing to promote the Lowry campus expansion and ensuring the master plan is appropriate while continuing to raise funds for the project. Addressing underrepresented populations, meshing recruiting and retention with a graduation-completion agenda, and growing concurrent enrollment are other pressing matters.

Anderson has fulfilled larger responsibilities in her primary position at CCCS, where she’s tasked with ensuring the quality of academic programs and student affairs statewide.

She’s helped shape the delivery of education to 162,000 annually by leading the faculty and frontline student services staff at 13 institutions. She’s executed policy handed down from the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education. Anderson’s also been responsible for guaranteeing that state and federal funds for Career and Technical Education are dispersed properly to 160 school districts around Colorado.

This isn’t the first time she’s experienced a ‘fill-in’ role, either. She once served as interim president at Community College of Denver. “But there’s some external things that fall under the president’s purview that I didn’t have as interim at CCD,” she said.

Anderson called her new responsibilities at CCA a great opportunity to advance her own professional development, piggybacking on a background already steeped in classrooms and advocating for students.

Her career began as a middle school science teacher, continued as an elementary education professor at the University of Nebraska, then moved to Colorado in 1998 as a special assistant to the president at the state’s largest community college, Front Range. She advanced there to become VP for student learning before taking on a similar role with CCCS beginning in 2006.

“I think education is the pathway to prosperity and I value it so much,” she said. “I’m one of those very lucky people who are in the profession that they were designed to be a part of.”

Anderson already has begun the process of networking within Aurora with government officials, business leaders, the city chamber and the public at large as she begins settling into her expanded responsibilities.

“The fit was perhaps natural for Moseley and her “Architectural Lingua” series exhibited at the Donna Moravec Gallery, highlighted by a grand-opening ceremony Feb. 24,” Gibbons said of the gallery exhibit.

Artist opens gallery in style

Elayne Moseley was a public teacher in inner-city Houston, then a substitute in Aurora before turning to art full time.

So the fit was perhaps natural for Moseley and her “Architectural Lingua” series to open the revamped Donna Moravec Gallery, highlighted by a grand-opening ceremony Feb. 24.

“A lot of times the schools don’t emphasize the arts, so it’s great it can be on the community college level,” Moseley said. “It’s wonderful.”

The CCA gallery on the Lowry campus was officially dedicated at the opening-night fete. Diane Simard, a CCA Board Member, is benefactor for the gallery and her donation will help sustain the room financially for the next couple years.

The gallery is named after Simard’s late mother, and Simard and her three siblings from Nebraska were on hand for the ribbon-cutting.

William Randal Painter, a member of the art-department faculty, commissioned a painting of Donna Moravec that was also unveiled, which will reside permanently in the gallery.

“I’m certainly an advocate for getting the ball rolling, whether it’s art or business,” Simard said. “It’s something I feel very passionate about. … I love to be an advocate, to just be the first one to get it going and show what the possibilities might be.”

Sue Gibbons, a member of the CCA art faculty, and Scott Wakefield, chair of the Art and Design Department, have noted their vision previously of drawing regional, national and perhaps even international exhibits to the gallery about twice a year, to complement student and faculty shows.

“It’s what we had hoped for,” Gibbons said of the gallery exhibit and open.
Bowman: “Banding together” a key

Continued from page 1

2. How difficult has it been to change and shape attitudes about community colleges over the last 20 years, dating back to the start of your career?

“We’ve never been better loved. The President just announced in his budget -- which isn't what will happen but there's good intentions -- an $8 billion infusion to focus on community colleges. So people love us, but they understand in one particular siloed way, generally. They don't understand all the things that we do, and too many think, “It's for somebody else's kid, family or neighbor.” And until you stop and say, “Do you know anybody that ever went to a community college?” or “Have you had an experience?” Then they'll sort of stop and think about that.

So it's hard for people to get their arms around: yes, we do transfer preparations; yes we do workforce development; yes, we do work with students who aren't prepared yet for college. All of those things are part of our mission. But it's confusion.

We're not a niche organization; we're a broad-access organization, so it's a continual battle, and we see that with fund-raising. People give to the universities and will give to a place where, to be honest, unless they give a huge gift here it doesn't make a huge difference, where a modest gift here can make a huge difference in somebody's life, or in the life of a program, or in a supporting a faculty member. So it's continuing.”

3. The average lifespan for a college president is about 4-5 years on average. How did you manage to stay 2-3 times that long while keeping friends close and not making too many enemies?

“That question actually comes on several fronts. The first is, “How have I kept myself challenged?” And it's a challenging job and a challenging community. And I've also had this opportunity to play a role statewide and that's been important, and for the college, it has advantages and disadvantages.

But I think the other thing is that I've stayed very politically neutral, even though I'm very politically active, which means that I work with all of our legislators and our colleges as a resource to them to all of our policymakers at all different levels. But I have been careful not to take sides on issues, other than always advocating for our students.”

-- Bowman, on her career longevity at CCA

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“We don't want commit a crime, so maybe we should do this.” And so we got a guide and drove for 21/2 hours, then we got in a canoe for another 45 minutes, went down the river and arrived.

It did stretch my comfort, I have to say. We were in this guest longhouse and there were two other couples, each with their own guide. We didn't know them previously. The guides cooked for us and then we went to the main house. And the longhouse is this big structure. It's up on piers because it's right on the river, and the river floods. The chief lives in the middle, and as families come and someone marries, they add on each side. We were invited to meet the chief and I think they said he was 87, covered in tattoos from head to foot, didn't speak any English. There were cockroaches flying around and they were passing around homemade rice wine. And during the night – we were on these little foam pads – with mosquito nets over us, you could hear all the critters. It was crazy.

I didn't really drink the rice wine but Roger did and he was snoring. So I tried to get under him so if anything crawled over us it would crawl over him, not me (laughs).

5. Many of the staff and administrators at CCA can attest to the fact that you are a morning person. How many times would you say during your tenure you’ve texted someone at 4:30 a.m.?

“How many times? More than I can count. Why would I tell you this? My new pride and joy is a treadmill desk. It’s an actual truck desk. There was an article a few months ago … about a desk that fits over a treadmill and we just moved downtown to our condo and given away our treadmill because there’s a nice workout room. But I saw that and thought, “That is just so cool.”

So I now have a new treadmill and this desk that goes over it. You can write – it’s a little sloppy – at 2 mph, you can type at 3 (mph) and read at 4 (mph), but no real incline. Every day I do all three. The best reaction I’ve gotten, we have some good friends from Arvada and they said, “That is so you.” So whatever that means. (laughs).”

Dr. Linda Bowman doles out hugs during a farewell tea Feb. 24, during which CCA employees told stories about her school tenure. Bowman was given a plaque, certificate and state plaque.
About 60 Aurora Public School students transformed building materials into working rocket racers as part of a Math Day for Girls event Feb. 10. A host of Raytheon engineers, led by keynote speaker Sarah Law, told students about the types of engineering careers available to them in the future. “Team Rocket Theory,” comprised, from left, of Ngoc Le, Dylan Slocome, Lindsey Heaston and Melyziah Smith sent their balloon-powered rocket 306 inches to win the distance competition.

Members of the Black Hands Drum Ensemble (above) and the Grand Design Chorale (right) entertain a crowd at the CentreTech Student Rotunda as part of a Black History Month celebration in February.

A panel discussion followed the screening of the documentary “Miss Representation” Feb. 23. The movie tackled stereotypical portraits of women in media, film and politics that lead to the eventual oppression of the gender.

Randal Painter, commissioned to paint the portrait of Donna Moravec, stands next to the finished piece after its unveiling Feb. 24. Painter shared his inspiration for using various artistic elements in the painting.
**New student orientation**

Fall registration begins in a little over two months and at that time CCA will begin offering new student orientation sessions for the fall 2012 semester.

Currently all new students are required to see an advisor prior to registering for classes. Unfortunately, many of these students do not have the background information that they need to fully benefit from these sessions.

Starting with our fall 2012 registration, all new first-time students to CCA, both full-time and part-time, will be required to attend an orientation session. Mandatory orientation for new students is a research-supported best practice in higher education.

A mandatory orientation is no small undertaking and requires a well-informed, supportive and involved campus community to be successful. The hard-working committee of student services staff and faculty appreciate your assistance as we communicate this new opportunity (and requirement) to students and deliver the best programs possible.

We are confident that this initiative will help all of our new students to get to the best start possible, and that our attention to their needs at the “front door” will pay off in increased retention and success.

--Betsy Oudenhoven, Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management

**Plaudits and accomplishments at CCA**

- **Jaime Corchado and Patrick William Youdom**
  - Honored as CCA’s nominees for the Rising Star Award, selected on the basis of leadership and involvement in student activities.
  - Corchado was among a group invited to NASA for a simulation experiment.
  - Keumoe has served both as president and VP in student government.

- **Patrick Schooler**
  - The department chair for EMS and Fire Sciences Technology was recipient of the annual Jerry Wartgow Award, a statewide honor given by the Colorado Community College System to a faculty member that excels both in the focus and use of technology to educate students.

- **Ryan Manzanares and Malinda Peasley**
  - Cited as CCA’s two representatives on the Phi Theta Kappa All-Colorado Academic Team.
  - Manzanares is president of the school’s PTK Society and worked to raise the profile of the campus honor society.
  - Peasley has served as a PTK officer while raising awareness of increasing retention and graduation rates.

**CCA Events**

- Spoon River Anthology, 7:30 p.m performances on March 15-17 and 23-24, Larry D. Carter Theatre
- Highline Canal Cleanup, March 17, CentreTech Campus, 8 a.m.-noon
- Interfaith Dialogues, Brown Bag Lunch Discussion, March 20, 11 a.m.-noon, A108 Centre Rotunda, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Elayne Moseley, Architectural Lingua, through April 11, M-F, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Donna – Moravec Gallery, Lowry, Bldg. 901