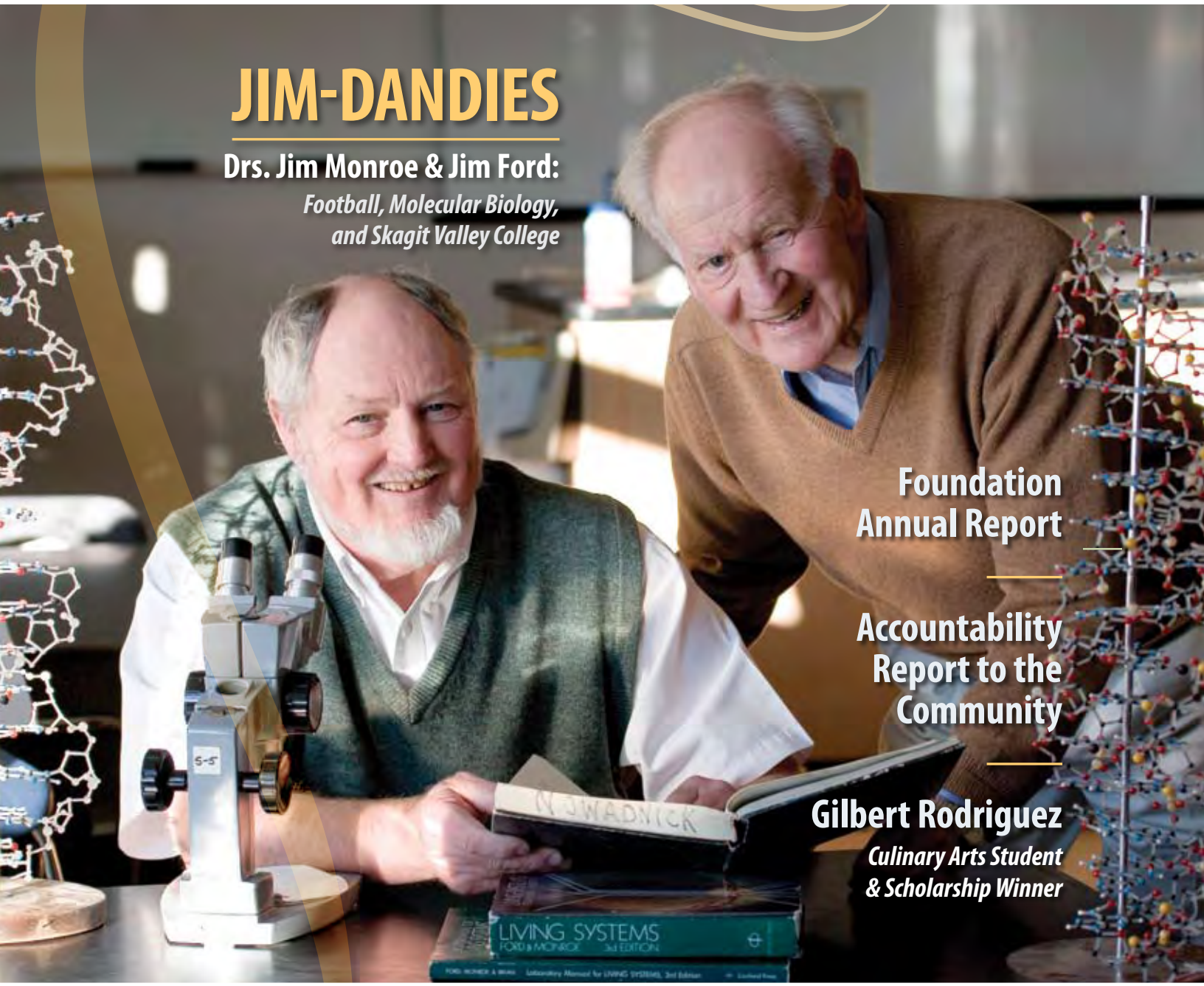
"RATED AMONG THE BEST COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE NATION."
— *Washington Monthly magazine, August, 2007*

SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE

Currents

1st Issue, 2008



JIM-DANDIES

Drs. Jim Monroe & Jim Ford:
Football, Molecular Biology, and Skagit Valley College

Foundation Annual Report

Accountability Report to the Community

Gilbert Rodriguez
Culinary Arts Student & Scholarship Winner

Skagit Valley College
Where Learning Comes to Life

Skagit Valley College
Currents
1st Issue, 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	President's Message
3 - 4	Jim-Dandies
5 - 6	Dr. Jim Ford
7 - 8	Dr. Jim "Doc" Monroe
9	Accountability Report to the Community
10	Celebrating Students- Gilbert Rodriguez
11 - 15	Foundation Annual Report 2006-07
16	Around the District

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Executive Director of Human Resources
2405 E. College Way
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
360.416.7794

COLLEGE MISSION

Skagit Valley College exists to expand opportunities and horizons for students and to improve the communities in which they live. We achieve this by welcoming and valuing diverse learners, providing quality education and support, and contributing community leadership and service.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This past fall, we were very pleased to learn that Skagit Valley College earned national recognition as one of the best community colleges in the United States. *Washington Monthly* magazine ranked "America's Best Community Colleges" and Skagit Valley College was among the top 30 colleges named. In its August issue, journalist Kevin Carey noted that SVC scored highly in those measures correlated with student engagement and graduation rates.

Without a doubt, our recognition reflects the cornerstone of our success: the value of personal relationships. Over the last 80 years, our faculty and staff have nurtured a culture that is highly student centered — one in which our students thrive. Our faculty and staff's commitment to active learning strategies and personal relationships helps our students succeed.

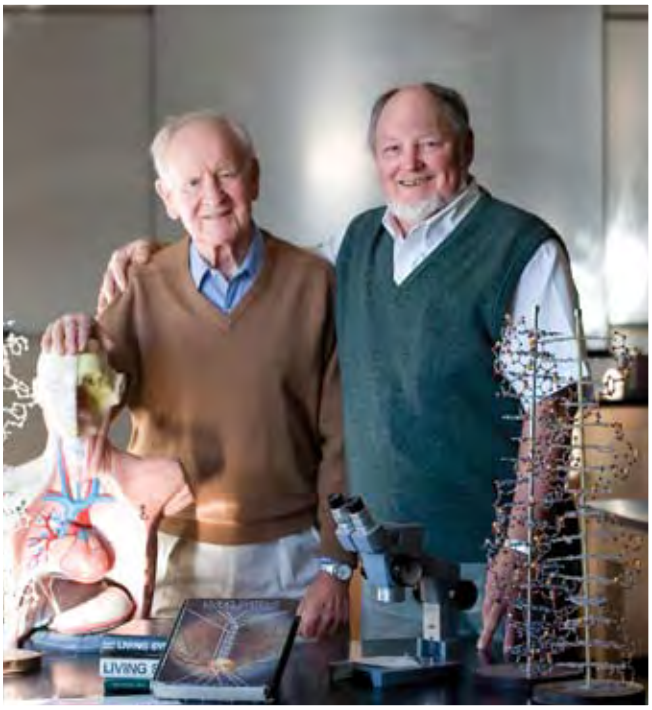
So, in this edition of Currents, I believe it is fitting that we showcase two legends who helped shape the commitment to student success for which we are recognized: Dr. James Ford and Dr. James Monroe. As you read about them, you will see how two lives are intertwined around common themes of science and Skagit Valley College. These two "jim-dandies" demonstrate the value of personal relationships at their very best.

Secondly, I encourage you to review the Annual Report by the SVC Foundation, also in this edition. The fiscal year just completed on June 30, 2007 was the Foundation's best ever, with total assets nearing $9 million. It is through the great work of the Foundation, along with the generous support of donors, supporters, and volunteers, that our students can receive valuable scholarships to help them achieve their educational goals.

I trust that you will see that personal relationships — both past and present — make the difference at SVC. On behalf of the Skagit Valley College Board of Trustees, thank you for your ongoing support. As always, I welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gary Tollefson
President



Jim-Dandies

Former SVC President Jim Ford and former science instructor Jim 'Doc' Monroe are both exceptional men who helped shape today's Skagit Valley College.

Their lives intertwined around common themes — science and Skagit Valley College. The Jims' friendship grew like tulips in the fertile soil of the Skagit Valley. They were both science instructors at SVC — cut from the same cloth, as Dr. Ford put it — and their personalities complemented one another nicely. Monroe is the funny guy, always ready to find humor in a situation. Ford is the serious one, never shying away from responsibility.

Ford was the first to come to Skagit Valley College in 1954. He taught for six years and coordinated the night school before taking leave to get his Doctoral Degree in 1960 from Oregon State University. He was assigned to a four-person research office — "There were three Jims and a John in that office," Ford recalled later. One of those other 'Jims' was Jim Monroe. The two had the same area of concentration, what would now be called molecular biology. They also had the same major professor, took classes together, and went to sports games together. Their shared interests blossomed into a strong friendship. When Ford returned to SVC and saw an opening for a science instructor, he thought immediately of Jim Monroe.

Monroe had offers to work and teach at two universities, including Western Washington University, but he chose Skagit Valley College instead.

"When I first came here, I recognized right away that we had a mature faculty. This was truly a college, and not a spiced up high school; there were people here with truly impressive credentials," Doc said. "I felt like I belonged here. I loved the area and I wanted to raise my children here."

The Jims shared good years and good times together. Both Doc Monroe and Jim Ford were highly regarded in their field, and the science program at SVC was also well respected. In the late '60s several publishing companies approached Dr. Ford about writing a biology textbook unlike all the other textbooks out there. While other texts discussed animals, plants and organisms separately, this book would be based on shared concepts like cell structure and ways of producing food and energy — mechanisms all organisms have in common. Ford knew having a general biology textbook that approached the subject as a series of concepts would help students learn, and he knew he wanted his friend Jim Monroe as his partner on this project.

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Jim-Dandies

Science instructors Dr. Jim Ford, Dr. Jim "Doc" Monroe, and Dick Nowadnick at the annual biology lunch at Sagers Restaurant in Mount Vernon.

continued from p 3

Monroe was still writing his thesis at that time, and wrote for it and the book together. The two of them would stay up until 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. at times editing it, and be back at SVC ready to teach their classes during the day. As always, Monroe found ways to make them both laugh.

"One time there were too many 'the's' in the book, so one of our tasks for a few days was to remove all the 'the's' and rearrange the sentences to make sense without them — I called it 'the' hunting," Doc said. "We still laugh about that today! We did things like 'paragraph plumbing' and 'sentence surgery.' I'd say, 'Jim, we've got to do major surgery on that sentence,' and then we'd laugh and get to it."

The writing and editing took about two years, and Monroe did most of the drawings for the original text himself. He and the other biology faculty test-taught the book to work out any kinks, and the first hard-cover edition of *Living Systems: Principles and Relationships* came out in 1971, along with accompanying lab manuals and study guides. In the coming years, they both traveled throughout the Pacific Northwest promoting the book.

"It was a big success," Ford said. "At any one time, more than 125 colleges and universities would be using it." That list included Western Washington University and Seattle Pacific, just to name a few. The revised lab manual is still used today by SVC biology students.

Somehow, the Jims found time for recreational pursuits at SVC. Ford and Monroe both coached sports teams, and enjoyed playing on the faculty intramural football team — Ford was quarterback and Monroe played center. The sports tradition continued until Ford was 60 and Monroe was in his 50s. By then Ford had become President of Skagit Valley College and Monroe was Department Chair and Faculty Union President.

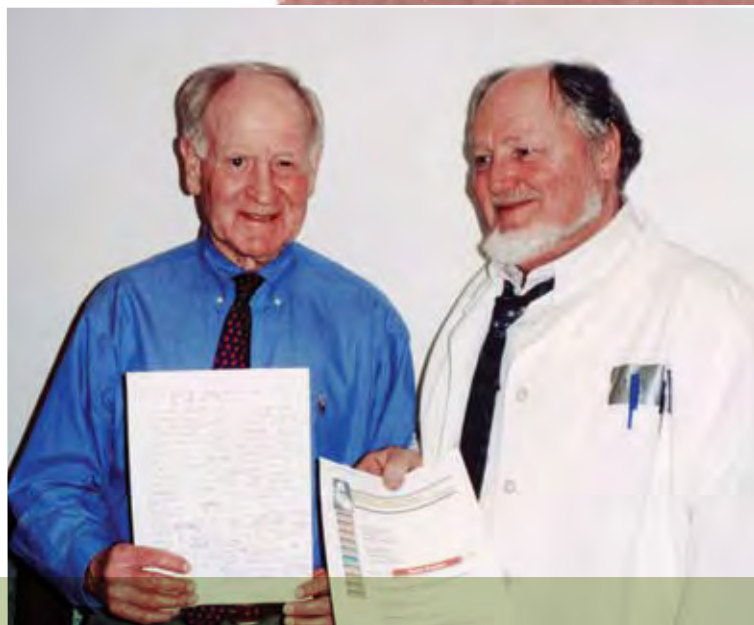
"It was like serious fun," said Athletic Director Gary Knutzen, who has been at SVC since 1963. "It was sort of a standing joke among the faculty football team members that if quarterback, Ford, called the center delay play one more time — a play in which Ford passed to the center, Monroe — they would all leave the field and head to the locker room. By the way, the center delay play was very successful and generated many touchdowns for the faculty team."

Ford and Monroe both enjoyed the fact that traditional barriers like 'teacher' and 'student' fell away during games. Dr. Ford remembered one particular game he played as president that showed the climate of the campus at that time, "One of [the students] put a pretty good hit on me, and somebody said, 'You shouldn't do that to the president' and I said, 'No, if I go out on that field I'm fair game. I don't want any favors."

Both Jims are now retired, and still enjoy getting together to discuss whatever is 'going on' in the world — especially if it relates to science or SVC.

Below: The 'Jims' in the SVC greenhouse where Dr. Ford conducted part of the research which was applied to his doctoral thesis in molecular biology.

Bottom: The two 'Jims' at a seminar on evolution.



Dr. Jim Ford

Dr. Jim Ford was President of Skagit Valley College for 18 years, successfully overseeing a period of expansion and growth for the college, but his tenure here began 23 years before his presidency. He taught — and learned — a great deal about the college and about life before accepting SVC's highest leadership post.

As a teenager, Jim spent a lot of time in the woods hiking, fishing, and generally observing the natural world around him. It was easy — he grew up in the small logging community of Ryderwood, with the forest always nearby. "I knew all the best fishing spots," he recalled.

Jim's father would drive him out to the Mount St. Helens and Spirit Lake area in the summers, where he would camp out — alone — for 7 to 10 days in the woods. Dr. Ford, as he's now known, believes his boyhood wanderings in the woods and natural curiosity about the world led him down the educational path he chose in life — ultimately leading to a Doctorate in Cell Biology, and a minor in genetics.

Fulfilling one of the roles of a college president, Dr. Jim Ford hands out diplomas at graduation.

Like many men from the greatest generation, Jim's first taste of leadership was in World War II, as a seaman in the Pacific theater. At 18, he was in charge of twenty 17-year-olds on board ship. Like them, he had joined the Navy at 17 — right out of high school — and he used his year of experience to lead, teach, and guide them as best he could.

"Jim Ford was a serious, outstanding, teacher, who always brought current events from biology into his classroom," said his long-time friend Jim Monroe. He is a man familiar with the weight of responsibility, and never shies away from a leadership role.

President Ford poses with Phi Theta Kappa graduates.

After the war, he was one of the thousands of servicemen who used the G. I. Bill to go to college and extend his education. He received an Associate's Degree from Lower Columbia Community College, and transferred to Western Washington University for his Bachelor's degree. Ford never forgot the strong foundation he received from Lower Columbia, and the great teachers that helped him along the way. It was during those community college days that he decided to make a career out of working at a community college. He didn't know then that he would ultimately become a college

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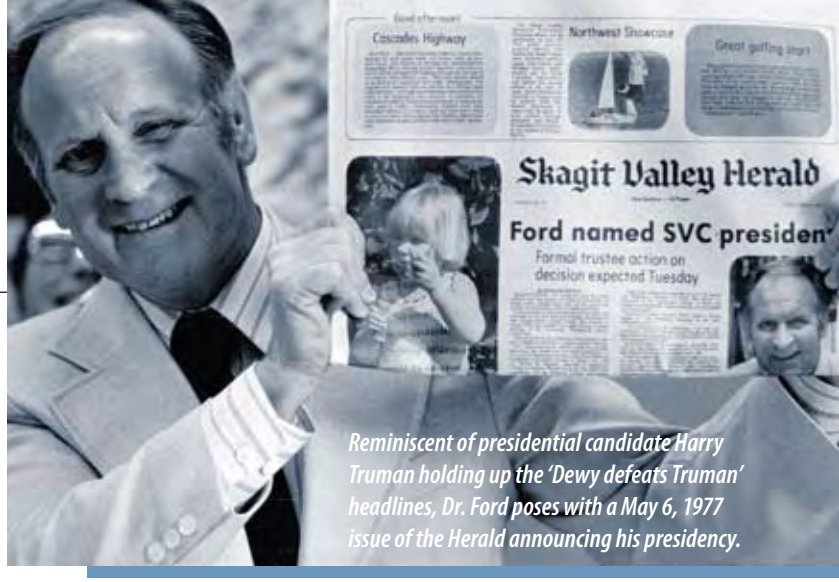
Dr. Jim Ford



Reminiscent of presidential candidate Harry Truman holding up the 'Dewy defeats Truman' headlines, Dr. Ford poses with a May 6, 1977 issue of the Herald announcing his presidency.

continued from p 5

president, but he knew his future success would be intertwined with a community college.

Ford started down that path in 1954, when he accepted a position at SVC as the ninth full-time faculty member hired on at the college. He was night school director, taught zoology, biology, and algebra, and coached the track and baseball teams. It was a lot to take on, but most of the faculty also taught multiple classes and coached a sport or two, so Ford wasn't doing anything out of the ordinary.

"It was a very small college, only 160 students and 10 faculty," he said. "Students felt very close to the faculty, we chaperoned their dances and did things to get to know them."

Ford was always interested in leadership, even before he came to SVC, because "That's how you get things done," he said.

He credits the early founders of SVC for guiding and instructing him on the ins and outs of working at a college, and on ways to make ideas and programs successful.

"Dr. Hodson [SVC's first president after the college became independent of the school district in 1967] was a real builder. He hired me, and I give him a lot of credit. I learned a lot from him," Ford said, adding that he learned about management and finances from Dr. Cole [the college's second president]. "I learned a lot from each of these men before I became president."

Now retired, Dr. Ford is still involved with the college, including the James M. Ford Golf Classic that started while he was president and is now in its 20th year.

As he looks back on his career, it is clear he has few regrets. "I felt that education and providing services for people was where I got my kicks. As I saw Skagit Valley College grow and develop it was rather thrilling to me!"

Below, clockwise from top:

- *Dr. Ford and former Governor Booth Gardner during the dedication of Ford Hall, fall 1988. Former SVC Board of Trustees member Kelley Moldstad stands in the lower left.*
- *Dr. Ford, characteristically confident.*
- *Jim Ford, then Dean of Instruction, talks with science instructor Dave Strong.*
- *President Ford as quarterback for the faculty intramural football team in the 1980s.*

Dr. Jim Monroe

Yes, he was known for jumping on desks and lecterns, and yes, Jim 'Doc' Monroe was prone to storytelling almost as much as lecturing. But all his stories had a lesson, and his antics had purpose — to help students learn.

"When I was a student here, Monroe was the instructor in my first biology class in the fall of 1971," says retired SVC biology instructor Robert "Skip" Pass. "He was one of the best instructors I ever had. He had a great rapport with students in the classroom. He'd use a story as an analogy and tie it to something complicated we were learning in class."

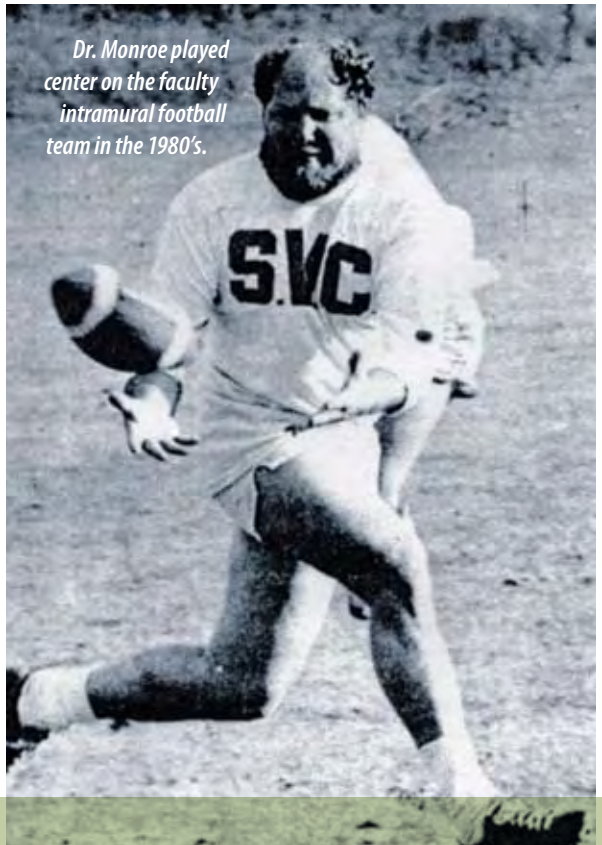
A few years later, Skip accepted a teaching position here, and Monroe became his faculty mentor.

"He was always good about reminding me to be prepared for a lecture," Pass says. Doc, as all the students called him, helped develop core curriculum for the Registered Nursing Program ATA Degree and taught science and biology courses for nursing majors in addition to science classes for transfer students.

He would always go out of his way to assist a student and help them understand a concept.

"Students — especially nursing students — were trying to write down every little thing during lectures, and they just couldn't write fast enough, so I said 'bring your tape recorders,' and I'd come to class and there would be tape recorders everywhere — it was like a presidential address!" Monroe recalled. "But I soon realized that some students didn't have, or couldn't afford, a tape recorder, and I decided to do something about that."

Dr. James 'Doc' Monroe prepares a classroom experiment, circa 1992.



Dr. Monroe played center on the faculty intramural football team in the 1980's.

What he did was create artwork and record his lectures and make this extra content available to students in the library.

"He was unique in that way because it took outside work to put that stuff together and he was willing to put that extra time in to helping students," Skip said.

In the summers Monroe would take seasonal jobs fishing in Alaska, then return to SVC in the fall to teach.

In the spring, Monroe took his students on field trips to experience the natural world rather than just learn about it in books.

"We did a lot of field trips," Pass remembered. "Every spring we would go on a field trip to either the Olympic Peninsula or Eastern Washington. We would stay in interpretive camps, every evening we'd lecture about the things we would see the next day, then get up the next morning and go see it. Monroe was very hands-on like that."

continued p

Dr. Jim Monroe

continued from p 7

The gentle folds around Doc's eyes convey a lifetime of smiles and laughter. He retired from teaching at SVC in 2000, after 37 years at Skagit Valley College.

Doc Monroe left an enormous legacy through the students he taught over the years who are now contributing to society as nurses, doctors, and scientists. His legacy also continues through a biology scholarship he endowed while still an instructor. Every fall for the last 35 years the award has been given to an outstanding biology major who plans to continue his or her studies in biology.

His passions have been both deep and broad. Doc remains very active in the community. He loves to sing and is a member of the Skagit Valley Chorale. In 2004, Jim was selected as President of the Skagit Performing Arts Council. He is also a proud and active member of the Clan Munro society, and a tireless volunteer for the Skagit Valley Highland Games, where he serves on the board of directors. In fact, Jim is at the Highland Games every year sporting his clan kilt and his familiar smile.

"I've always been a service-oriented person. I've always worked towards making a contribution to humanity in the areas of my endeavors," Monroe said.

'Doc' Monroe with fellow science instructor Robert 'Skip' Pass during a field studies class trip to the Crown Rock area on the Olympic Peninsula.

Below, clockwise from top right:

- *Jim's attire when singing with the Skagit Valley Chorale.*
- *In the classroom, circa 1992.*
- *Jim Monroe looks on while Robert Pass uses his hands to paddle after their boat's engine dies in Coronet Bay.*
- *'Doc' Monroe takes water quality samples during a field studies class trip to Sun Lakes State Park in Eastern Washington.*
- *Athletic Director Gary Knutzen with Jim Monroe.*

Accountability Report to the Community

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Credit Class Enrollment for Fall, 2006

AGE & GENDER

The average age for students enrolled at SVC was 32. The majority of students were female, with an average age of 33. In contrast, the average age for male students was 29.

Female	**63%**
Male	**37%**

ETHNIC DIVERSITY

	Number	Percent
White	4,571	71%
Hispanic	882	14%
Asian/Pacific Islander	333	5%
International	328	5%
African American	109	2%
Other/Not Specified	100	2%
Native American/ Native Alaskan	73	1%
Total	**6,396**	**100%**

ATTENDANCE

Part-Time	**59%**
Full-Time	**41%**

PROGRAM GOALS OF STUDENTS

	Number	Percent
University/College Transfer	2,668	42%
Workforce Training	1,871	29%
Family Life, Other	998	16%
Basic Skills	779	12%
General Studies	80	1%
Total	**6,396**	**100%**

FINANCIAL DATA

SOURCES OF FUNDING

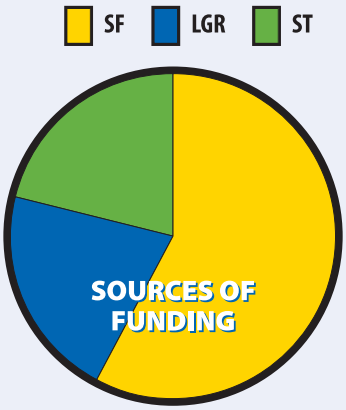
State Funds	58%
Locally Generated Revenue	21%
Student Tuition	21%

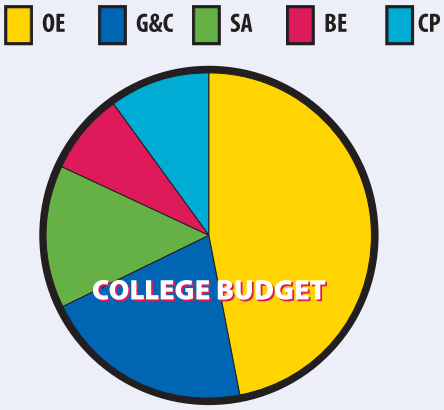
COLLEGE BUDGET

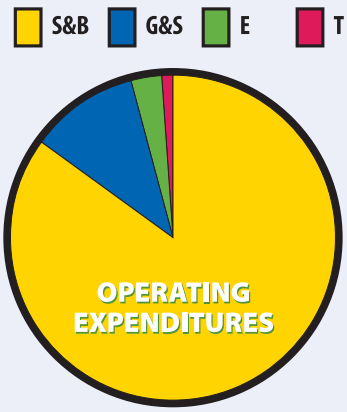
Operating Expenditures	47%
Grants & Contracts	21%
Student Aid	14%
Capital Projects	10%
Business Enterprises	8%

OPERATING EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY

Salary & Benefits for Teaching and Support	85%
Goods & Services	11%
Equipment	3%
Travel	1%







2006-07 SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID

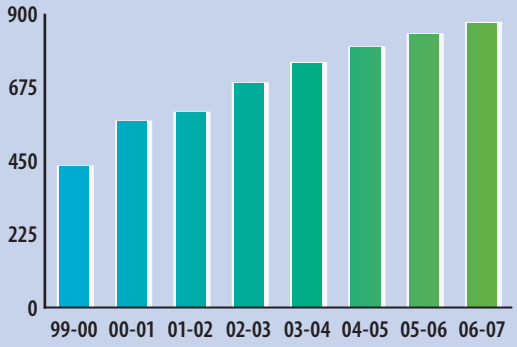
In 2006-07 the SVC Foundation awarded over $240,000 in scholarships to SVC students; $7.7 million in Financial Aid was distributed to 2,100 students.

2006-07 DEGREES & CERTIFICATES AWARDED

During 2006-07, the college awarded 515 degrees, 384 certificates, and 52 high school diplomas.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

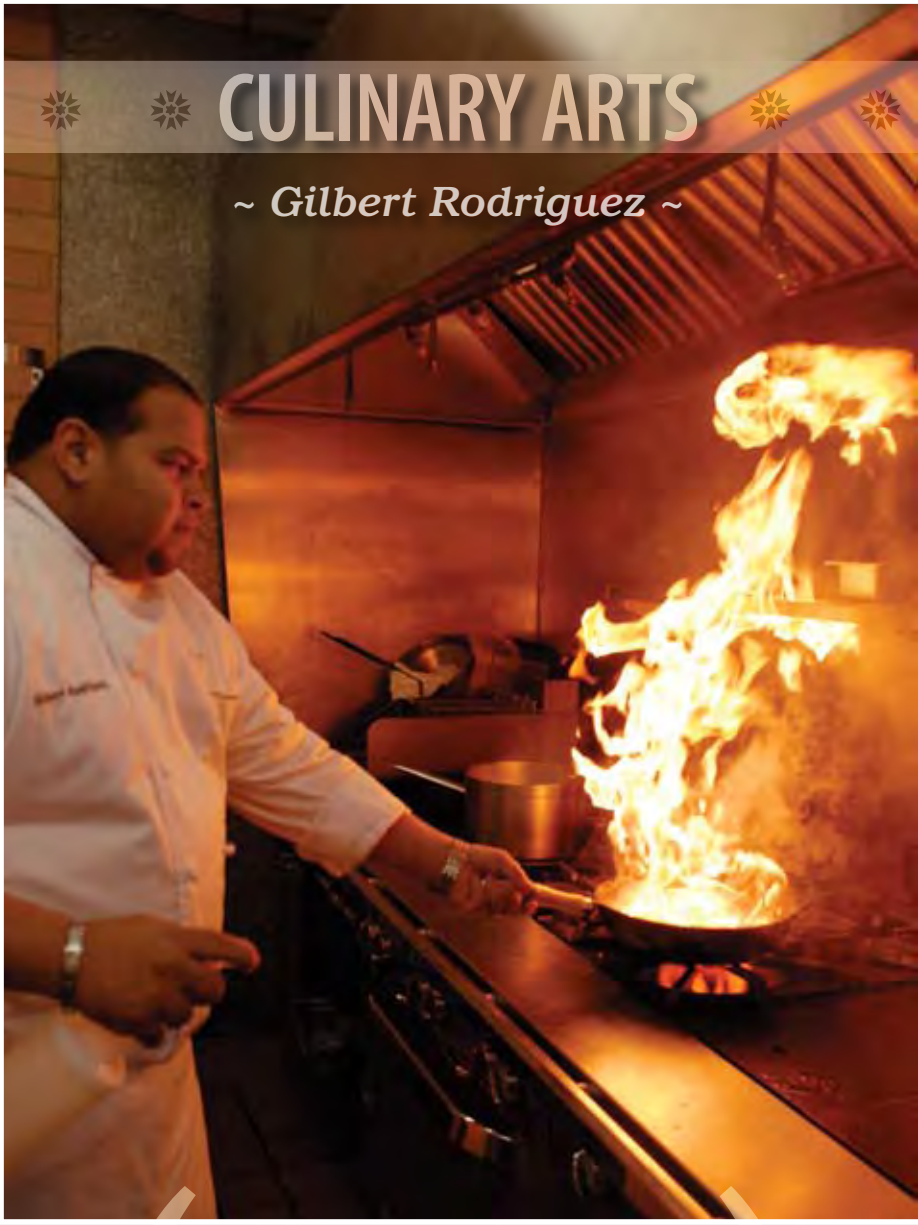
Annualized FTES - *All Funds*



Celebrating students

CULINARY ARTS

~ Gilbert Rodriguez ~



In June, Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management sophomore Gilbert Rodriguez competed in a mystery cook off against students from three other area community colleges — he walked away with an impressive 1st place and a $5,000 scholarship. The Chaine des Rotisseures Seattle Bailliage awards scholarships to promising culinary students, and administers a cook off to determine who will receive these funds. Gilbert and the other students didn't know what ingredients or equipment they would have access to until they got there. Competitors have two hours to cook an appetizer and a main course, as well as prepare presentation plates and tasting plates for the judges.

The competition wasn't hard for Gilbert, who has gone to competitions like this before with the SVC Culinary Arts team, and also caters events and weddings in his spare time.

"I breathe cooking; that's all I do every day," he said. "If you can work 18 hours cooking and you don't get tired of it, then you love what you do!"

The non-traditional student started out washing dishes, but he knew there was more to working in a kitchen than that. He learned to cook and learned to love the creative expression cooking gave him. That's when Gilbert came to Skagit Valley College — so he could advance in a career he'd already worked in for several years.

"I didn't think I would learn as much as I've learned," he said. "I've learned that it's never too late [to go to school], that was always my fear. It has definitely been worth it for me."

Gilbert's $5,000 Winning Menu

First course: Coriander Seared Scallops & Potato Corn Blini with Goat Cheese Cream Sauce.

Main course: Yucatan Chicken Breast Stuffed with Shrimp Mousse, paired with a Vegetable Risotto, Haricot Verts, and Romesco Sauce.

Foundation

Annual Report 2006-07

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my role as president of the Skagit Valley College Foundation is to report our accomplishments and thank our contributors and volunteers for a very successful year. Generous community support enables the Skagit Valley College Foundation to assist deserving students and provide necessary resources for exceptional instruction. I am pleased to report that 2006-2007 was an outstanding year!

Cecilia Johnson, President SVC Foundation

Highlights of 2006-2007 include:

- Donations increased 43.8% from 2005
- Four new endowed scholarships were added in 2006-07
- Endowments increased $521,730
- The endowment balance on 6.30.07 was $5,387,943
- Nearly $300,000 was awarded in student scholarships and faculty excellence awards

Another Foundation highlight was the addition of a community fund-raising event, Asian Infusion. Held in September at the Foothills Auto Center, it was an occasion for entertainment, fabulous food, and a rousing auction. Adding an auction event to our calendar along with two successful golf classics makes for a very busy event schedule and generates new funds that are necessary to keep up with the pace of tuition.

Educational success is critical for all students and for the economic vitality of our community. By providing support we enhance the educational experiences for students of SVC and encourage faculty innovation. The support we provide each year continues to enhance the educational experiences at Skagit Valley College by providing opportunities to deserving students and innovative faculty.

We are deeply grateful to our donors who continue to provide vital educational support each year. On behalf of our students, their families and our college, I extend a heartfelt thank you to each of you. You truly make a difference in the lives of our students.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Johnson

Cecilia Johnson, President

Board Of Governors 2006-2007

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Skagit Valley College 2006-2007

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The Katherine Cowles Scholarship

"The Katherine Cowles Scholarship has assisted several hundred students over the past 10 years. It has been instrumental in not only helping students with tuition and/or books, but it has assisted students with child care expenses and the state qualifying exam to become a licensed practical nurse. It has also assisted working practical nursing students with pursuit of their registered nursing degree via our part-time evening/weekend program."

Dr. Mick Donahue, Vice President
Whidbey Island Campus

BALANCE SHEET

June 30, 2007 (audited)

ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	$366,456
Investments	$6,311,778
Receivables	$54,654
Prepaid insurance	$1,856
Property and equipment, net	$2,000,755
Land and collections held for investment	$6,071
Deferred bond issue costs, net	$57,440
Total Assets	**$8,799,010**
LIABILITIES	
Accounts payable	$11,607
Accrued interest	$23,990
Tenant security deposits and prepaid rent	$62,552
Long-term debt	$2,574,376
Life income annuities	$63,614
Total Liabilities	**$2,736,139**
NET ASSETS	
Unrestricted	$294,769
Temporary restricted	$380,159
Permanently restricted	$5,387,943
Total Net Assets	**$6,062,871**
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	**$8,799,010**

ENDOWMENTS

Achievement (SVC) Scholarship

Allenbach Exceptional Faculty

Anderson/Walls Art Scholarship

Brian Alan Benike Scholarship

James P. & Mabel Bishop

Dr. Ian Black Memorial Scholarship

Martin Brown Biology

Cascade Mall Scholarship

Champions of Diversity

Sidney H. Clark Scholarship

Sharon Cole Scholarship

Ruth & Wallace Crawford Scholarship

Max & Pauline Dale Scholarship

Everett & Elmyra Dalton Scholarship

Micki Deierlein Scholarship

Elfstrom Scholarship

James M. Ford Scholarship Fund

Thomas & Martina Horn Endowed Scholarship Fund

Miriam, Muriel & Lloyd Ivey Endowed Scholarship

Challenge Grant Endowment

Exceptional Faculty Challenge

Exceptional Faculty Endowment

Wallie & Mary Ann Funk Scholarship

Jesus Guillen Scholarship

Leon H. Guggemos Scholarship

Hayes Family Scholarship Fund

Yoko Hisaki

John Hollenbeck Memorial Scholarship

Human Services Foundation Scholarship

Dr. Maynard Johnson Family Medical Fund

Alice & Harold Kenney Scholarship

J. George King Scholarship

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Brandon Koetje Scholarship

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2006-07 EXCEPTIONAL FACULTY AWARDS

This year's Exceptional Faculty Awards, totaling $42,652, were approved by the Board of Trustees for 2006-2007. The following faculty received recognition:

FINISHED WORK:

Nancy Anderson & Susan Hunt-Deschenes
Six years service conducting faculty/staff annual wellness program

Emi Fredlund
Service to Worker Retraining students and marketing SVC programs to community agencies and services

Barb Moburg
WIC study skills and distance education faculty forums

Anita Ordóñez
Diversity Steering Committee leadership

Linda Smith
Leadership of the Center for Learning & Teaching and expansion of the Teaching & Learning newsletter

Kristi Spinnie
Achieving Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Authorized Testing Center status for the OFTEC department

WORK IN PROGRESS:

Marilyn Chu, Jane Hohne, & Barbara Martinez-Griego
Implementation of an Infant and Toddler Caregiving and Child Guidance curriculum

Beth Cole & Leslie Peebles
Piloting Campus Toolkit Program with TRIO students

Mindy Coslor
Funding Center for Learning & Teaching presentations

Dani Cox & Martin Hahn
Culinary Arts team competition preparation

Andy Friedlander
Development of Theater Arts internship/Learning into Action opportunities

Brian Hanchett
Live online student advising

José Sanchez & Jason Lind
Spanish literature on KSVR radio

Chuck Luckmann
Work on his book *Bridging the Divide: Toward a Bicultural American Identity*

Jim McCleery
Analysis of Math 96, 97, 98, and 99 success rates

Claus Svendsen
A comparative analysis of selected watersheds in western North America

Anne Will
Development of the learning community *A Swinomish Family Tree*

Foundation Online Giving

Making a gift is now easier then ever!

We are pleased to offer donors the opportunity to contribute through an online gift. The online giving form is secure and convenient, offering you the flexibility you need while providing the best security available. Join us by making a gift on your schedule at ***www.skagit.edu/foundation****. Of course, we are always available to assist you by calling the Foundation Office at 360.416.7717.*

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The Foundation Auction

Asian Infusion

Guests who attended the return of the Foundation auction were dazzled by acrobats and stilt walkers from Dream Science Circus. The one-of-a-kind event raised $65,000 for students.

To our guests, it was clear this would be a night to remember! Foothills Auto Center was transformed from sleek and modern to an Asian-inspired destination. SVC International students in traditional dress greeted guests as Culinary Arts students prepared fresh sushi. Musicians from Skagit Opera captivated the room while hors d'oeuvres from a variety of Asian cultures were served. The stage was set for a successful auction featuring fabulous dinner parties, adventures, and even a 2008 Toyota Prius.

Fund-raising events like this support important scholarships and program enhancements at SVC, promoting student success. To learn how you can help support future activities, please visit www.skagit.edu/foundation or call 360.416.7706.

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Around the district

WHIDBEY ISLAND CAMPUS

In 1999, students at the Whidbey Island Campus decided to improve the aesthetics of their campus by acquiring works of art from both students and professional artists. The first two pieces were by female German Expressionist Kathe Kollwitz, and Spanish Romantic Francisco de Goya. The collection has since grown to 90 pieces, including two Picassos.

The students of the Whidbey Island Campus are creating a legacy in this body of artwork that will be enjoyed for generations to come.

BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER

To better serve baby boomers and young retirees moving to Skagit County, SVC has initiated Prime Time at Skagit Valley College, a series of classes and workshops geared toward this demographic. Since the program began about a year ago, more than 200 people have participated in classes like Beginning Watercolor, Northwest Coast Indian Art, Women with Weights, Optimal Health, Aging Gracefully, Is Religion Necessary?, Kayaking the San Juans and many more. For more information about Prime Time at Skagit Valley College, or if you would like to share a special interest or talent by teaching a class, please contact Terri Nogler at 360.416.7909.

SAN JUAN CENTER

Learning at a distance is not an option but a necessity for many students who live and work in the islands of San Juan County. Limited ferry runs that can take up to three hours make for a difficult commute. "We've seen huge growth in the numbers of students who are attending SVC online so we are doing everything we can to help them succeed in their learning," said San Juan Center Director Dr. Denise King. The Center has responded by offering an orientation workshop that featured online instructors and island students who have excelled while learning online. Individual sessions on navigating Blackboard help take the fear of the unknown out of the first-time online experience. The Center's computer lab now has extended hours to provide a resource to students in the evening. It's all part of improving distance education for students.

SOUTH WHIDBEY CENTER

The South Whidbey Center helps women succeed in college and in life with the three-quarter Women in Transition Program. The advocacy class is funded by a grant from the Arise Foundation, and starts the process of bringing positive changes into each woman's life by focusing on their strengths and talents. Success stories range from successful businesswomen to students who have gone on to win awards for their work. Whether venturing into the job market, back to school or opening a business, this highly regarded program shows students how to take those first steps. For more information, call 360.341.2324.

MOUNT VERNON CAMPUS

The sign on the door states, "Welcome to Old School Hoops." This is the locker room of the Skagit Valley College Faculty Sports Team. The tradition of faculty vs. student sports games begun by James Ford and others continues just about every day on the basketball court (see page 4 for that story).

The faculty team has members from departments all over campus, including math, speech, world languages, art, counseling and psychology.

"I enjoy it because the students are eager to test their mettle against the faculty," said math instructor Greta Kocol. "Not only are they learning basic basketball fundamentals out there, they also learn basic addition as we consistently score against their porous defense."

Skagit Valley College
Where Learning Comes to Life
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