

FOUNDATION NEWS

MRC Foundation
1001 West Chestnut Street
Virginia, MN 55792

Volume I
Number 1
May, 2021



College Update

By Shelly McCauley-Jugovich, Provost

Over the 2020-2021 fall and spring terms, Mesabi Range College held all classes on the Eveleth campus, as many of the programs require a hands-on, in-person learning environment. The campus adhered to social distancing, cleaning protocols, and masking, which allowed students to receive their instruction in person. With the COVID Pandemic and the uncertainty on both campuses, we had a smaller number of in-person classes on the Virginia campus, with a majority of courses delivered online or hybrid. Housing on the Virginia campus was reduced in capacity in accordance with Executive Order mandates.

As we begin planning for the fall 2021 term, we are eager to have all students return to on-campus instruction, and our athletic programs return to the court and field. The MRC Preparedness Plan (social distancing, masks, and cleaning protocols) will guide us as information from the Minnesota Department of

Health changes. Students have already begun to register for Fall 2021 classes, which will begin August 23. Vision NE innovation and planning teams continue to move our colleges forward as we become one college with six campuses. Vision NE updates can be found on the NHED website. <https://www.nhed.edu/>

The Mesabi Range College 2020-2021 academic year will soon be coming to an end. We look forward to celebrating the academic achievements of our students on May 12 with a virtual graduation ceremony. Watch for details on our website! www.mesabirange.edu



Kim Pittman, a Cherry native, is the Office Coordinator of the Mesabi Range College Foundation.

She has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Wisconsin – Stout as well as a Master's Degree in Management from the University of Phoenix.

Currently, Kim is the President of Elementary Sports for the Cherry School, the Treasurer for Cherry Baseball and is the Financial Secretary at Faith United Lutheran Church. She enjoys volunteering in her community and meeting new people. In her spare time, Kim loves to spend time with her husband, Dustin, and their three children. They enjoy the outdoors, the lake, camping, fishing, and any type of sports.

Kim spent most of her career in mining before deciding to make family her top priority. She said, "Working with the Foundation has been an absolute joy for me. I love working with our Board of Directors and all of our wonderful donors." Besides interacting with everyone around campus and also bringing positive news to students, she looks forward to what is to come in the future.

She invites you to meet the new Board of Directors on the following pages; and also encourages you to contact the Foundation office at 218-748-2433 with any concerns.



Sue Medure, a Virginia native, currently is the President of the Mesabi Range College Foundation. She has an Associate of Arts Degree from Mesabi State Junior College as well as a Bachelor of Science Degree and a Master of Education Degree from the University of Minnesota at Duluth.

For 39 years, Sue was a teacher and taught elementary physical education, business, marketing, sociology, and coached volleyball and track. She also served on many committees such as curriculum, personnel, facilities, graduation, and student activities, to name a few. During her 10 years of teaching in the public schools and 29 years at Mesabi Range College, she still maintains a special bond with many of her students.

Sue is also the President of the Mesabi Range College Alumni Association and a member of the Provost's Advisory Council. In her spare time, she enjoys showing her Afghan Hounds, Cajun and Usher, at AKC Dog Shows and boating on the Mississippi River with her husband, Phillip.



Cindy Jindra is the Vice President of the Mesabi Range College Foundation. She is retired and enjoys photography, pottery, sculpture and writing. Her background is in education, beginning as an art teacher and ending her career as the principal of a K-12 school.

In 1988, Cindy's son Jeremy, a student at MRC, was killed in a car/bicycle accident. She and her husband Dennis established a scholarship in his honor and eventually it was put into one of the buckets. While they understood the reason for the buckets, their family was saddened to lose that personal identification.

When she was approached to be a part of the Foundation Board, she felt it was a way to add the perspective from someone who had been a part of the donor process. She was delighted to see the enthusiasm of the new board in addressing the concerns of donors regarding the buckets concept, as well as their commitment to creating a streamlined and supportive scholarship application process for students. Cindy looks forward to working with the new board in creating access to educational opportunities for more students within the community by opening the door to an education that benefits the individual learner.



Dr. Bonnie Edwards is the Secretary of the Mesabi Range College Foundation. She is a proud MRC alumna who went on to earn her bachelor's degree from BSU, her master's degree from UMD, and her doctoral degree from the U of M Twin Cities, with post-doctoral studies at the UWS.

As a faculty member at Mesabi Range College, Bonnie taught speech communication, computers, and business for 30 years. After retiring from Mesabi, she taught business communication at UMD for five years.

Dr. Edwards continues to stay active in the Mesabi Range College community by being a member of the Provost's Advisory Council and the MRC Alumni Association Board of Directors (past president). She has also served on the UMD Alumni Board of Directors (past president), BSU Alumni Board of Directors (past secretary), Duluth AAUW (Public Policy chair and Membership chair), and Virginia AAUW (past president).



Steven B. Johnson is the Foundation Treasurer and brings experience to the board because he has served on the Foundation Board in the past. He currently works part-time as the bookstore coordinator at Mesabi Range College. This position allows him to provide regular support to students. He is a second term Virginia City Councilor serving on various city related committees and boards.

In the past Steve has served on the Ambassador Committee with the Laurentian Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Rotary Board, Lyric Center for the Arts, Catholic Community Services of Superior Board of Directors, Foster Grandparents of Northeast Minnesota & Northwest Wisconsin, Virginia Teen Center, East Range Academy of Technology and Science School Board, and so many others.

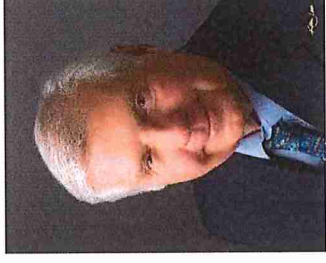
Steve is the proud father of two adopted children and regularly provides foster care to children in need through St. Louis County Social Services.



Mark Muhich, Director, is the Managing Public Defender for Northern St. Louis and Carlton County, Sixth Judicial District Public Defender Office based in Hibbing. Prior to his current position, he was an assistant public defender and operated a private general practice in Virginia for 20 years. Mark is a past president of the Range Bar Association and has been practicing law on the Iron Range for 27 years.

From 1993-2008, Mark was an adjunct instructor at MRC and taught political science, criminal justice, business law, and was head coach of the women's basketball team from 1994-96. Other activities include past president and member of the Range Mental Health Center Board of Directors, chair of the Eveleth Planning and Zoning Commission, a MN State High School League speech judge, and presiding justice and scholarship chair of Eveleth Elks Lodge #1161. He is a member of the E-G High School band boosters, choir boosters, past president of the Hoop Club, and defensive line coach of the football team.

Mark, a Hibbing native, lives in Eveleth with his wife, Alison Perry. They have two sons: Quinn, a sophomore at St. Scholastica; and Brennan, a sophomore at E-G High School who will be attending MRC as a PSEO student in the fall.



Tom Aro, Director, was raised in Virginia. He attended Virginia Junior College then transferred to the University of Arizona and majored in accounting. Several years were spent working as a CPA for an international CPA firm in Los Angeles.

After leaving public accounting, he spent 40 years in the Hospitality and Gaming Industry working in Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, Reno, Atlantic City and New York where he held many senior positions in finance, development, and general management. Twenty-four years of Tom's career were as Chief Operating Officer for a privately-owned company based in New York City.

Upon retirement, Tom fulfilled a lifetime dream by returning to Minnesota's Lake Vermilion in 2008 where he currently resides with Renee, his lovely wife of 59 years. Tom currently serves as Vice-President on the Alumni Association Board of Directors at Mesabi Range College.



Brenda K Kochevar, a Director, has been employed at Mesabi Range College since 1994 as the Director of Enrollment Services & Public Information. Other duties throughout

employment at MRC included serving on the Provost Leadership Cabinet, Student Life Advisor, Dance Team Advisor, and Physical Fitness Instructor.

In addition to assisting students, Brenda has served on several committees, such as Skills Fair Committee, Crisis Team, Marketing Committee, Graduation Committee, Alumni Association, Laurentian Chamber of Commerce & Ambassador Committee, NHED (Northeast Higher Education District) Marketing Team, and Scholarship Committee.

Brenda graduated from Mesabi Community College with an Associate of Arts Degree and continued her post-secondary education at the University of Hawaii and the University of Minnesota, earning a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Hawaii. Her interests include, teaching exercise classes, biking, snowboarding, music concerts and loving her funny, four legged friends – Trixie & Pickles ☺. “I feel so lucky to love my job and come to work every day!” she said.



Elizabeth Pluskwik, Director, grew up in Virginia and graduated from MRC in 1986, then completed her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in accounting. She started

her career as a CPA doing auditing and tax work, and then served as Controller in a family-owned manufacturing company. Elizabeth felt the call to education and spent nine years teaching accounting at St. Ambrose University in Iowa. She completed her PhD in Organization and Management in 2010 and now leads the business and quality improvement courses in the Iron Range Engineering (IRE) program, which is located at the MRC Campus, as a program of Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Elizabeth’s heart is tied to the Iron Range and our young people. She aims to make education affordable, relevant, and easily accessible to anyone and everyone who wants to continue to learn. Her passion is to create pathways to higher education locally available and accessible in the Iron Range region. She also serves on the Essential Health Foundation Board. Elizabeth enjoys outdoor activities in the woods and waters of our beautiful area with her husband and family, and looks forward to serving on the Foundation Board to facilitate scholarships and educational opportunities for our students.



Tom Inforzato, Director, has been a Northeast Higher Education District employee since 2008, first serving as the Assistant Director of Mesabi Range’s Upward Bound programs and Assistant

Football Coach.

In 2013, he left Mesabi to take the Head Football coaching job at Itasca Community College also serving as an Academic Advisor. He returned to Mesabi Range College in 2017 taking over as the Head Football coach and Student Success Advisor. In his first year back at MRC, he led the Norse to a Minnesota College Athletic Conference state championship game and a Red Orange Bowl appearance in Chicago. Mesabi Range’s football program continues to be one of the top teams of the MCAC year after year.

Tom has an Associate of Arts Degree from Mesabi Range College, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Physical Education from the University of Wisconsin - Superior, and a Master of Arts Degree in Education from St. Mary’s University. Tom lives in Hibbing with his wife Carly, son Toby, and daughters Mayzie and Josephine.

Board Accomplishments and Goals

Accomplishments

- 📌 Completed orientation which covered all facets of the foundation.
- 📌 Created a new nine-member board of directors. Each new board member brings special talents (e.g. accounting, finance, fundraising, and law) to the foundation as well as a willingness to participate in foundation activities.
- 📌 Eliminated the 10 percent scholarship donation service fee.
- 📌 Opened the 2021-2022 scholarship applications at the end of February so students had the opportunity to apply in a timely fashion.
- 📌 Started a Foundation Newsletter.

Ongoing/Future Goals

- 📌 Continue to recruit two to four more board members who possess the expertise needed to complete a strong working board.
- 📌 Select the scholarship recipients for 2021-2022 by May 15.
- 📌 Re-evaluate the organizational structure of the scholarship buckets and look to return to the named scholarships.
- 📌 "Back to School" Barbeque in late August for students, donors, and college employees.
- 📌 Attend the Minnesota State Volunteer Foundation Board Member Summit on May 21 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. All board members are invited.

*Thank you to all
of our donors for
their generous
support to the
Mesabi Range
College
Foundation's
Scholarship
Program!*

The Board of Directors of the
Mesabi Range College
Foundation meets the last
Tuesday of each month at 12
noon.

Calendar of Events

- May 12
Virtual Graduation
- May 21
Minnesota State Volunteer
Foundation Board Member
Summit
- May 25
Foundation Board Meeting
- June 29
Foundation Board Meeting
- July 27
Foundation Board Meeting
- August 23
Fall Semester Begins
- August TBA
Foundation Barbeque
- August 31
Foundation Board Meeting