



Plugged **in**

FACULTY & STAFF NEWSLETTER



REDESIGNED MATH COURSES
INCREASE STUDENT SUCCESS

NURSING PROGRAM TAKES
SWIFT AND DECISIVE STRIDES

HISTORIAN JEAN HARRIS IS
2015 PROFESSOR EMERITUS

SHARKNADO: MOCK DISASTER
NEARLY DEVOURS JONES HALL

PUTTING PEOPLE TO
WORK

SPRING**2015**

VOLUME VII



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Strategic Plan More Critical than Ever for AC

By Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart
Amarillo College President

A group of AC employees representing the No Excuses Core Team attended the DREAM Institution in February. DREAM is an Achieving the Dream conference of over 5,000 people representing 400 colleges from around the country. The keynote speaker made a statement that stopped me in my tracks. He said, “Every program, every service, every policy, every college is perfectly designed to achieve the EXACT outcome it currently produces.”

We are working very hard as a college to improve student success and completion. While our completion rates are above the state average, they are nowhere near the level we need. Right now, our processes and policies are perfectly designed to produce the very 20% completion rates we report. In order to change the direction of poverty in our community, ensure our budgets are stable and advancing, and align us with the Aspen Award winners, we must produce 70% completion rates. To get to that number, we must ensure our programs, services, policies, and College are perfectly designed to achieve these 70% completion rate outcomes.

As a result, our strategic plan will be more critical than ever for AC. As a leadership team, we have identified the No Excuses values necessary to ensure our college culture can appropriately redesign our processes to accomplish our ambitious goals. The values, although unusual for higher education, are actually based on the most innovative and effective corporate and non-profit organizations in the world. So, over the next year, I will be asking you to embrace these values and brainstorm ways to implement them.

AMARILLO COLLEGE VALUES

Create a No Excuses philosophy through actions which display the following values:

1. Caring through WOW

- Every student and colleague will say “WOW, you were so helpful, supportive, and open” after an interaction with us.

2. Caring through FUN

- We will find ways to have fun with each other and celebrate each other.
- We will find ways to make our work fun and effective.

3. Caring through INNOVATION

- We will see ourselves as a “roadblock remover” – for students and for each other.
- We will always look for ways to help others and improve our processes.

4. Caring through FAMILY

- We will find ways to show we care about our students and each other.
- We will readily and effectively share information with each other.
- We will approach our interactions with each other with trust and openness.
- We will put the needs of others before our own.

5. Caring through YES

- We will think “yes” first and find solutions rather than finding “no.”
- We will be passionate about our jobs and helping each other.

With these values, Amarillo College will have developed a culture willing and able to tackle our strategic plan goals (next page). They align with the student success points funded by our state and with the Aspen Award goals designed to promote and extend student learning and completion. By embracing our new values, these goals will be within reach.

Your cabinet members are taking these values and goals to your divisions to listen to your ideas, answer your questions, and record your suggestions. Each division will complete action plans targeting these goals and identifying budget implications for long-range planning. I hope to learn from your experiences as we develop our strategic plan. I am excited to hear about your action items for impact. This will be an important journey for us as a College family.



Institutional Goals – Actions

GOALS	DEFINITION	ACTION FOR IMPACT
1. Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve persistence • Increase completers • Decrease time-to-completion 	Comprehensive Transfer/Completion Pathways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage Civitas for completion and planning • Greater coordination with advising and financial aid for full-time enrollment • Career/transfer focus for all advising • Expand Acceleration of programs • Revise & Contextualize Developmental Education
2. Align degrees and certificates with labor Market Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do graduates obtain well paid jobs? • Do graduates perform well as employees? 	Align All HB5 Endorsements with AC Career Pathways Use data to lead with career pathways in every aspect of AC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising • Programs and courses • Marketing • Organizational Structure • Recruiting • Admission processes
3. Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase student engagement • Increase performance on student learning outcomes • Adjust programs and courses based on competencies 	Infuse and Scale High Impact Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the use of learner center pedagogy • Leverage program outcomes for improved learning • Program for student success with more responsive and purposeful scheduling • Embed high impact practices across the curriculum
4. Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase enrollment of sub-populations • Increase completion of any sub-populations • Increase enrollment of sub-populations • Increase completion of any sub-populations 	Build Systems for Equity Gains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemically remove barriers of poverty • Use data to address achievement issues across populations • Scale NO Excuses "culture of caring" programs and training • Integrate whole families into enrollment and completion • Ensure equitable access to all college resources • Enhance intercultural competencies across the institution
5. Financial Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative • Entrepreneurial • Responsible 	Build Systems for Financial Viability and Fund Raising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build smaller and more responsive budgets • Increase donations through on-line targets by program • Construct an organizational structure for fund raising • Define policies and processes for fund raising



ON THE COVER . . .

Five buildings were brightened in February when a total of 19 signs (the industry term is "building wraps") were installed on the East Campus. This sign on the Transportation Career Center covers about 600 square feet. Designed by Stefanie Carruth of College Relations, they depict programs contained in the buildings they adorn. The common theme: "Putting People to Work."



Quinones Anchors Captivating Distinguished Lecture

A captive audience of just over 400 enjoyed the 2015 Distinguished Lecture featuring ABC's John Quinones on Feb. 24 at the Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts.

Quinones is an Emmy Award-winning co-host of ABC's newsmagazine *Primetime Live* and anchor of its offshoot *What Would You Do?* His lecture focused on moral courage. The event was orchestrated by Student Government Association and raised about \$4,000 for student scholarships.

TOP: These AC stalwarts from the Student Affairs Division, joined here by the guest of honor, were integral to the event's success. They are, from left, JoBeth Hill, administrative assistant, April Sessler, associate vice president, Heather Atchley, director of student life, and Jeanetta Smiley, executive secretary.

RIGHT: John Quinones had these AC leaders riveted.



Associate Degree Nursing Program Taking Swift and Decisive Strides

The Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Program is pleased to report that 95 percent of its program graduates passed the national licensure exam on their initial attempt between October 2014 and March 2015. The December 2014 program graduates performed exceptionally well.

Should the May cohort achieve a first-time pass rate anywhere close to that exemplary mark—such an expectation at present is high—the ADN Program will return to its historically solid footing in the shortest possible timeframe.

The Texas Board of Nursing in January placed the ADN Program on Full Approval with Warning status following back-to-back years in which AC's annual first-time pass rates on the

NCLEX-RN exam fell below 80 percent. AC's annual first-time pass rates in 2013 and 2014 were 79.02 percent and 77.6 percent, respectively.

The Texas Board of Nursing requires programs to achieve a minimum 80-percent first-time annual pass rate to maintain Full Approval status, and it extends commendations to programs in which 90 percent of candidates pass the first time they take the NCLEX-RN. In 2010, AC's ADN Program received such a commendation from the Board.

Beginning with revised, more-stringent admission policies, the ADN Program was proactive in instituting smaller classes and a reduction in student-to-faculty ratios, requiring remediation in each course, raising the passing-with-a-C standard from 70 percent to 75

percent, and enhancing teaching practices in classrooms and clinicals.

These strategies are swiftly paying dividends as reflected in the December 2014 cohort's superlative performance. Once the May cohort's results are tallied and collated by the Texas Board of Nursing, the ADN Program will know whether its winter and spring RN candidates have combined to exceed the Board's 80-percent annual mandate. If so, AC will return to Full Approval; the warning would be immediately rescinded.

"We are highly optimistic at this point, but we also realize that we are only half way there," said Dr. Richard Pullen, who this academic year became AC's dean of nursing. "The strategies we implemented these past few months clearly are paying dividends."

UNNATURAL DISASTER

The ADN Program staged a mock disaster March 31 called Sharknado. It entailed a violent tornado that brought with it acrimonious sharks to Jones Hall. Fishy as that sounds, it served to expose Level IV nursing students to a variety of afflictions wrought by a combination of natural disaster and egregious shark bites. Living mock patients (and some dismembered mannequins) were triaged. No actual sharks were harmed.



A resilient Debby Hall, assistant program director, visits with media.



Dr. Richard Pullen, dean of nursing, makes like Peter Benchley and directs a shark.



The condition of Marianne Jones, instructor of nursing, gave students pause.



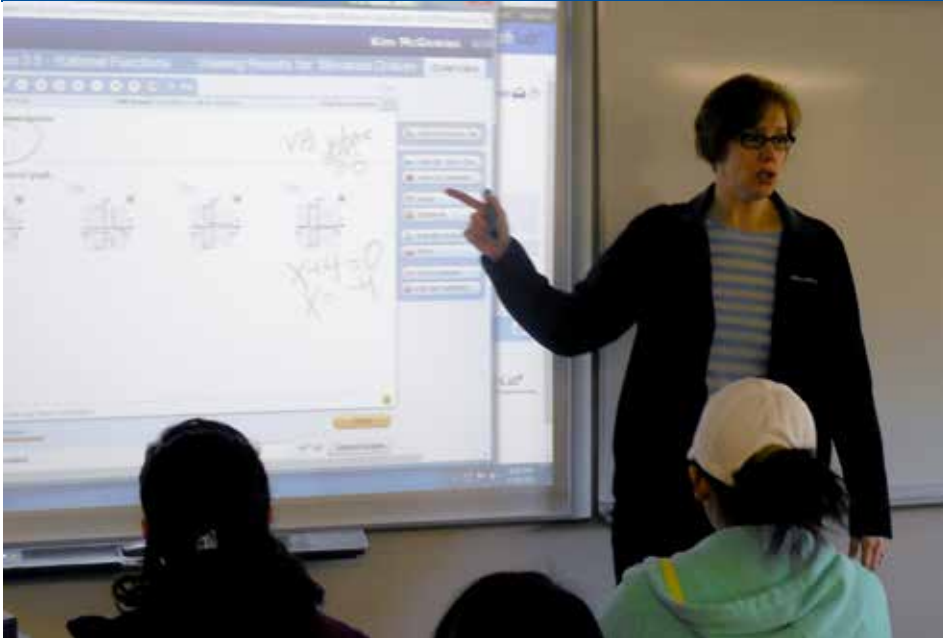
Even President Russell Lowery-Hart fell victim.



Danger lurked at every turn.



Mathematics Redesign Moves the Needle on Student Success



Kimberly McGowan, instructor of mathematics, is enthusiastic about using the new SMART Board technology when teaching College Algebra.

Opportunity came knocking in 2011, and Amarillo College opened the door to a \$4.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education that swiftly began moving the needle toward greater success for students in mathematical pursuits.

The Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) STEM Grant was conceived to improve overall math success for everyone, while specifically emphasizing an increase in the number of students who pursue and complete degrees in science, technology, engineering and math—areas that constitute STEM.

Consequently, students of math today are the beneficiaries of thoroughly redesigned courses that are supported by red-hot technologies and delivered in freshly refurbished environs. Oh, and the number of STEM majors increased by 36 percent from 2011 to 2014.

“Getting this grant was an enormous blessing for the College and for our students,” Dr. Kathy Wetzel, dean of STEM, said. “It brought us new excitement.”

It will be another year before the five-year grant is fulfilled, and even longer before the dust settles, but results so far are positive and apparent, certainly from a physical standpoint, to anyone who surveys the vastly upgraded Engineering Building or the stylishly relocated Math Outreach Center.

Invaluable new technology is in evidence, too—an influx of cutting-edge SMART Boards and accompanying software was afforded by the grant.

But opulence and amenities, though vitalizing, serve merely to support AC’s efforts to maximize the grant; the keystone from the outset has been course redesign. And stipend-supported STEM faculty have been diligently focused on redesigning, piloting and implementing the curricula, course by course, since 2011.

“We always strive to become better teachers,” Wetzel said. “We share strategies and we try new things, but there is only so much we can do on our own. The grant gave us the impetus to redesign all our math and engineering courses, and some science courses.

“I’ve been hugely impressed by how everybody has been willing to work toward the common good,” she said. “We were not always in agreement, but in the end we came together as a group, shared nationally known best practices, and tailored our courses to the best benefit of the students.”

SMART Board technology has enhanced in-class delivery, and homework is now completed and graded online, an important modification that keeps students on track and accountable. Students in some math classes are required to score 70 or better on online practice tests before taking exams that count, ensuring additional success.

To see the extent to which AC’s innovations are paying off, look no further than College Algebra, a core course often called a “gatekeeper” because of its penchant for blocking so many from degree completion.

Most students, by successfully navigating College Algebra, will have completed their math requirements at AC. Yet the course is an important stepping-stone for STEM majors who are looking ahead to upper-level courses. College Algebra had always been a melting pot of STEM and non-STEM students. That ended with course redesign.

“It was a big step, but we split College Algebra into separate tracks, one for STEM majors and one for non-STEM,” Collin Witherspoon, chairman of the Math Department, said. “When instructors went over material more than once to make sure everyone had a grasp, STEM students tended to suffer by unnecessary repetition. What they really need is more advanced preparation for Trigonometry, where those who are unprepared are hard-pressed to succeed.

“Conversely, when instructors say ‘this section is for those going on to Trigonometry or Calculus,’ they would be met with blank stares from non-STEM
(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

students, who see no reason to buy in," he said. "Separate tracks ensure that everyone is getting what they need most without being impeded by the needs of those with dissimilar aspirations."

The numbers tell the tale. Students in non-STEM classes, focused solely on algebra, vaulted from a 57-percent success rate in Spring 2012 to 67 percent in Fall 2014. STEM students, meanwhile, used their track to become better prepared for ensuing Trigonometry, a course in which the success rate has jumped from 63 to 74 percent.

Course redesign has been challenging and it is not over yet. Presently undergoing redesign are Calculus II and III, Electrical Circuits and Principals of Physics I and II. However, those courses that have already passed muster are making a difference, sometimes even indirectly, like when a non-STEM student who previously was intimidated by math suddenly awakens to its possibilities.

"That's the beauty of increasing student success," Witherspoon said. "Sometimes success changes perspectives. Maybe a light comes on. Someone once scared to death of math is no longer intimidated. They get it, and sometimes they even ask if they can change direction to something in a STEM field."

Paradigms shift—why not dreams?



Pie-eyed



"A Pie in the Face for the AC Food Pantry" raised more than \$600. President Russell Lowery-Hart takes one here from Don Nicholson, chairman of the Board of Regents. Also getting their just desserts April 27 were Richie Garza, recruitment coordinator, and Jerry Terry of industrial technology.



Performance Pads Pantry Purse



The Blue October concert, a philanthropic undertaking of the selfless folks at FM 90, netted \$2,200 for the Food Pantry – music to many an ear.



Machine Technology Earns Highest National Accreditation

The Machine Technology Program in April achieved the highest benchmark for metalworking training programs in the country when it was officially accredited by the National Institute for Metalworking Standards (NIMS).

This accreditation is based on the industry-written and approved NIMS Machining Level I Skill Standard, with a focus on four main skills credentials: Job Planning, Benchwork and Layout; Measurement, Materials and Safety;



Milling I; and Turning Operations – Chucking Skills.

To meet NIMS requirements, the program submitted a self-evaluation along with its faculty and student credentials. The program then underwent an intensive two-

day on-site evaluation, conducted in Fall 2014.

After a comprehensive facility inspection, observation of active students, plus in-depth interviews with program faculty, administrators and local employers, the evaluation team gave AC above-average ratings in Program Purpose; Facilities; Equipment, Tooling and Measuring Devices; Program Administration; and Program Faculty.



FACULTY AND STAFF ACCOLADES

Two members of the President's Cabinet, while their responsibilities and salaries will remain the same, have been elevated to the vice-presidential level. **Lee Colaw**, formerly chief of information technology, is now the vice president of information technology. And **Ellen Robertson Green**, longtime chief of communication and marketing, has been named vice president of communication and marketing. President Russell Lowery-Hart said the re-designations were made to achieve equity within the cabinet, which already contained three vice presidents. Now there are five.

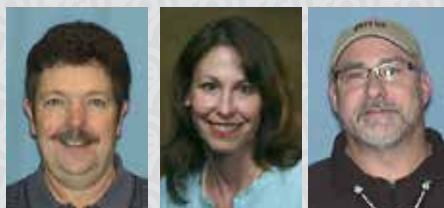
Scott Rankin, director of the Mortuary Science Program, has been named Funeral Director of the Year for 2014-2015 by the Panhandle Funeral Directors Association. He is a member of that august body, and he serves as a director on the board of the Texas Funeral Directors Association.

The votes have been tallied and the Administrators Association has new officers. Taking over as president is **Kelly Prater**, director of financial aid. **Kristin McDonald Wiley**, director of instructional effectiveness, is the new vice president, and **M.J. Coats**, marketing consultant, is the new secretary.

Bruce Moseley, Business Department chairman, has been elected to membership in the Fellows of the Texas Bar Foundation, an honor bestowed annually on only one-third of one percent of State Bar members. Fellows are selected for their outstanding professional achievements and demonstrated commitment to improving the state's justice system.

Heather Atchley, director of student life, finished second in voting for Advisor of the Year at the annual Texas Junior College Student Government Association Convention April 11 in Dallas. Why not? AC captured the Sweepstakes Award for most overall competitive points among the 50 colleges in attendance.

AC students captured a school-record 28 awards at the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association convention April 11 in San Antonio, and they did so under the tutelage of **Mike Haynes** and **Jill Gibson**, advisors for The Ranger, AC Current and acranger.com, and **Brian Frank**, who along with Gibson, advises "The AC Report."



ABOVE, left to right: Mike Haynes, Jill Gibson and Brian Frank

Patsy LeMaster has been named associate vice president of AC's newest division, that of employee and organizational development. She will be shifting from her role as associate vice president of teaching and learning, where she has long overseen the Center for Teaching and Learning. She will report to the new vice president once that person has been selected and put in place.

Kay Taylor and **HQ Wrampelmeier** will transfer divisions with her. Librarian **Mark Hanna** will assume responsibility for instructional technology housed in CTL.

Employment Milestones

The following **Classified Employees** have qualified for length-of-service pins since our last newsletter:

MARCH

Freddy Moore, 15 years
Sandra McGill, 15
Doug Messer, 10

APRIL

Robert Taylor, 10 years

MAY

Brenda Sadler, 30 years
Christina Gonzales, 20
Claudia Arnold, 15
Angie Alvarez, 15
Kathy Green, 15
Marissa Cochran, 5

The following **Administrators** have qualified for length-of-service pins since our last newsletter:

MARCH

Tracy Dougherty, 10 years

MAY

Daniel Esquivel, 10 years
Kim Crowley, 10

NOTE: No faculty have spring anniversaries.



Jason Norman Named Advising Administrator of the Year in Texas

Jason Norman, director of advising services, knows that having a purposeful plan at the outset—a roadmap to completion—is among the best ways college students can ensure their academic success.

The Texas Academic Advising Network (TEXAAN) recognizes Norman as one serious cartographer.

TEXAAN named Norman the Outstanding Academic Advising Administrator of the Year at its annual conference Feb. 18-20 in Corpus Christi.

The selection committee mulled a wide range of criteria and chose Norman for, among other things, his successful integration of advising concepts into AC's First-Year Seminar course; data-based success rates of students; the top-drawer team of professional advisors he has assembled and supports; and his demonstration of leadership not only in the academic advising arena, but throughout AC's No Excuses culture of caring.

Norman said he is gratified by the myriad nominations submitted on his behalf by AC colleagues.

"This award, while truly humbling for me because the broad support I received from my supervisors, my advisors and our faculty, is really a reflection of my entire staff," Norman said. "It's an accolade for everyone who works in advising services at AC, for all the advisors who do so much to help our individual students succeed. We're like the GPS system students use on their journey through school."

Norman became director of advising services in 2008.

"When Jason speaks, people listen," Mark Rowh, dean of health sciences, wrote in nominating Norman. "When he listens, those around him know that he is making plans to address potential barriers to optimal advising."

Summer Hours Commence Following Commencement



Spring Commencement is Friday, May 15 (7 p.m. at the Civic Center), and come the ensuing Monday, AC will begin its annual observance of summer hours.

This year they will be in effect from Monday, May 18 through Friday, July 31. They stack up thus:

SUMMER HOURS

Monday-Thursday	7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Friday	7:30 a.m. – noon

Regular hours will resume **Monday, Aug. 3.**

Summer hours do not extend into August this year because it is a vitally important month for enrollment. August brings increasing numbers of people on AC campuses, and bolstering enrollment is a priority. Moreover, as part of the No Excuses "Culture of Caring" program, there will be several opportunities in August to assist colleagues who work daily on the "front lines" of student enrollment and student success.

Joy Brenneman is coordinating the No Excuses "Culture of Caring" program and will send out additional information, including sign-up sheets, times/locations, and training times (if needed).



Selfie Italian Style



This AC quintet captured a group selfie while in Italy over Spring Break in accompaniment of 19 scholars who took advantage of the Global Educational Travel Program. They are, from left, Susan Burgoon, biology, Steven Cost, art, Judy Carter, honors, Ray Newburg, theater arts, and Heather Atchley, student life.



Child Development Lab School Celebrates Reaccreditation

The Child Development Lab School has received its much-anticipated reaccreditation and celebrated the milestone with an open house and other festivities April 10 on the West Campus.

The freshly remodeled Lab School was reaccredited until 2020 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), widely acknowledged as the foremost authority in the world on quality programs for young children.

AC's Lab School is one of only two programs in the top 26 counties of the Panhandle with NAEYC's prestigious accreditation.

"We are extremely proud of Lab School Director Chelsea Munkres and her staff of early childhood teachers who worked very hard to achieve this goal," Education Department Chair Mary Clare Munger said. "NAEYC is

the highest standard in the world. All our military bases throughout the world use this system, as do states when they judge agency efforts in state initiatives for young children.

"This is a very important achievement, one which is not easily accomplished."

The Lab School is designed to meet the educational developmental needs of young children 3 months to 5 years of age. In doing so, it serves as a primary education tool for AC Education Department students and community members on child-development educational paths, primarily through observation hours.

ABOVE: Wanda Young, right, and Chastatie Richardson held the banner that kids barged through during a celebration of reaccreditation at the Child Development Lab School.



AC Recognizes Historian Jean Harris as 2015 Professor Emeritus

It was in 1964 when Jean Harris began teaching history at Amarillo College, the same year Peter Sellers in *Dr. Strangelove* delivered these memorable lines: “Gentlemen, you can’t fight in here! This is the War Room!”

Harris, whose extraordinary career as an associate professor of social sciences spanned 41 years, admits her own classroom was occasionally transformed into something of a war room. She recalls one night class in particular when among her students were both peace officers and peaceniks. Every so often, discussions about Vietnam became volatile.

“They would get into a shouting match and I’d have to get between them,” Harris said. “Sometimes we had to move on to another topic of discussion.”

Harris appreciated the passion, though; for it was her own passion for events historic and students inquisitive that fueled her venerable tenure at the College, where her consistent expertise as both a teacher and a departmental leader was on display under a total of

eight different AC presidents.

Because of her devotion to students and her hands-on zeal for the institution, AC has conferred upon Harris the prestigious distinction of Professor Emeritus.

She will therefore be the guest of honor at a Faculty Senate-sponsored reception in her honor from 2-3:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 5 in the College Union Building on the Washington Street Campus.

Harris wore many hats during her lengthy tenure at the College. She at times chaired the Department of Social Sciences, served on the Faculty Senate and on the Rank and Tenure Committee, and co-sponsored the Phi Theta Kappa honor society. She also served on various self-study accreditation committees.

Fellow AC Professor Emeritus Reagan Hathcock says this of Harris: “She is a true scholar, a walking encyclopedia of history, and always willing to share with colleagues.”



Harris says she had not tired of teaching even in 2005, when she opted for retirement.

“I finally made the decision to retire because I began getting students who told me I had taught their grandparents,” she said. “I’d be thinking ‘oh, don’t tell me that.’ It was bad enough when I’d be talking about the Kennedy assassination and students would tell me they weren’t even born yet when it happened.

“But you know what? While I truly loved teaching all those years at Amarillo College—such great experiences at a great school—I can honestly say I really do love retirement, too.”



Harryman Relates Journey from Poverty to Prosperity



Connie Harryman showed up, and not just at AC for a pair of speaking engagements in late April. She doggedly showed up whenever opportunities

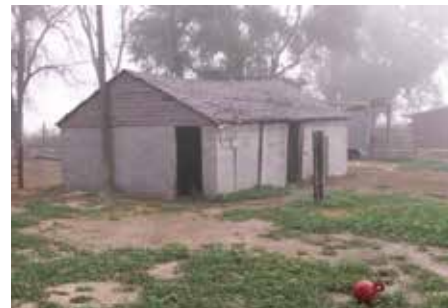
presented themselves along her precarious journey from abject poverty to prosperity. She said it repeatedly during her twin presentations: “I showed up!”

Harryman, who at age 8 worked 12 hours a day whacking weeds in the maize and cotton fields of rural Texas, had eight brothers and largely uneducated parents. They were migrant farm workers who lived

in a concrete block pig barn, unfurnished until they dragged in refuse from the city dump. Because they also liberated discarded books and magazines from that dump, Harryman learned to read and, ultimately, embarked on an academic journey that took her from Stratford High School to the University of South Carolina and finally to Clemson, where she earned a master’s degree in business administration.

A past national account manager for AT&T, where she developed sales and marketing strategies for Fortune 500 companies totaling more than \$50 million, Harryman today is a noted author, speaker and innovator.

She says anyone can create the future they desire if they are willing to make education a high priority, realize that if you can read you can figure out how to do anything, observe and copy successful people, and always show up.



Connie Harryman lived with her family in this pig barn outside Stratford.