

JUNE 2023



Taft College Employee of the Month

Maintenance worker and groundskeeper **Shawn Tofte** was named May Employee of the Month. *Congratulations!*

Taft College Class of 2023 Graduates Begin Next Chapter of Their Lives



On May 19, Taft College candidates for 2023 graduation lined up to walk onto the field of Taft Union High School's Marion Martin Memorial Stadium, as their families and friends filled the stands on both sides of the field. This evening marked one of the most important milestones of their adult lives. Superintendent/President Brock McMurray and Board President Billy White spoke to the crowd before Vice President of Student Services Dr. Damon Bell introduced speakers Angelissa Garza and Priscilla Pyun. *continued*

GO SHAWN!



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Class of 2023 Graduates *continued*

2022-23 Taft College ASO President Angelissa Garza welcomed students, family, and friends to the ceremony. As the Class of 2023 speaker, 2022-23 Taft College ASO Inter-Club Council (ICC) Representative Priscilla Pyun asked audience members to meet and greet one another, thanked various stakeholders on this collective journey to the finish line, shared her personal story, and masterfully delivered her humorous and inspiring message to fellow graduates. The night was a fitting send off to special students who overcame the adversity of a pandemic to succeed at their goals.





Taft College Student Spotlight: Devin Beasley

Devin Beasley, *left and below*, has been starring in Ovation Theatre productions in Bakersfield this summer. He just finished his leading role in **Grease** and will be the lead for Ovation's next production, **Footloose**, July 7 to July 30. He would more than welcome us cheering him on!



Board of Trustees President Billy White Honored by Community College League of California

Taft College Board of Trustees President Billy White, *right, center*, was recognized for 20 years of board service with a "Fulfilling the Trust Award" from the Community College League of California on May 6, 2023, at the Annual Trustees Conference held May 5 - 7 in Monterey, California. Elected in 2002, President White has served on our Board of Trustees for over 20 years, including 10 years collectively as Board President.



MAKE A STUDENT'S DAY



Graduate Recognition Luncheon

On May 9, Class of 2023 Promise Program and EOPS graduates were honored at a luncheon catered by OT's Cookhouse. Dr. Vicki Jacobi presented the Promise Program graduates. EOPS Counselors Gracie Mickelberry and Natalie Woodall presented the EOPS graduates. *Well done, Class of 2023!*





American Welding Society (AWS) Open House

On May 9, the Taft College Welding Program held its fifth annual American Welding Society (AWS) Open House at the Black Gold Court facility and the place was packed! Food was served, raffle prizes were awarded, a welding contest drew many contestants, and the local AWS chapter recruited new members.



Veteran Resource Center Holds Ray Scott Book Signing Event

The Taft College Foundation sponsored author Ray Scott's book signing event in the Student Center on May 10. Ray Scott, *right, middle*, is a 1982 Taft College alumnus, Taft College Foundation Board Member, Marine Corps. veteran, *and* a stage four colon cancer survivor. Each attendee left with a copy of his inspirational book, "My Cancer, God's Mercy."





Service Milestones Employee Luncheon

On May 11, Taft College held its Years of Service Employee Luncheon in the Student Center. Over 100 employees earned a service milestone since the last event before the pandemic. After a catered lunch by the Cougar Café, Superintendent/President Brock McMurray announced the names of employees in these six groups: **1)** Five-year Service Award Employees; **2)** 10-year Service Award Employees; **3)** 25-year Service Award Employees; **4)** 15-year Service Award Employees; **5)** One 30-year Service Award Employee (flanked by Trustees Orrin and Cole); and, **6)** 20-year Service Award Employees. Executive Assistant Sarah Criss did a fantastic job with a creative presentation that took us back in time. *Note: President McMurray recognized each of these groups in the correct chronological order.*



C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S A L L

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Children's Center Library Dedicated to Former Director Leslie Dragoo

On May 11, a special event was held at the Taft College Children's Center in honor of its former Director, Leslie Dragoo. The library in the lobby of the Children's Center was formally dedicated to Director Dragoo posthumously that evening. Friends and colleagues traveled from far and near to offer personal accounts of how they knew, *and ultimately loved*, Leslie. She was known for her intellect, ingenuity, grant writing abilities, and go getter attitude to raise monies to build this facility. Superintendent/President Brock McMurray welcomed everyone, including Trustees Dr. Kathy Orrin and Dawn Cole, as well as Vice President of Instruction Dr. Leslie Minor. Also, Children's Center Director Meghan Hall-Silviera gave a lovely tribute to her mentor.

**MAKE A STUDENT'S DAY**



Class of 2023 Scholarship Luncheon

The 19th Annual Scholarship Luncheon was held in the Student Center Cougar Café from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on graduation day, May 19. The Taft College Board of Trustees and Administrators sat at the head table which made for easy access to the podium. 54 different community scholarships totaling \$79,125 were given out to 52 recipients in the Class of 2023. OT's Cookhouse catered the event buffet-style.



Transfer Recognition Event

The Taft College Foundation sponsored a Student Services' Transfer Recognition Event on May 17 in the Taft College Student Center. The event recognized soon-to-be graduates who are university bound after commencement on May 19. Each of the transfer graduates received a gift at the check-in table and dinner was provided to all who attended, including family members cheering their Taft College Class of 2023 graduates on toward their bright futures. After dinner, a presentation followed along with ample time to socialize and take pictures in front of the Taft College-branded backdrops.





2023 Dental Hygiene Pinning Ceremony

Right before commencement on May 19, the Dental Hygiene Program invited candidates for graduation, as well as their families and friends for a celebration of food, fun, and pictures before 16 2023 graduates took the stage for their pinning ceremony and Dental Hygiene oaths. Director Dr. Vickie Kimbrough welcomed everyone. Guest Speaker was Dr. Eric Hershkowitz. Class of 2023 graduate Amber Allen spoke to her fellow graduates as their photo memories rotated on screen.

Transition to Independent Living (TIL) Program Honors Local Employers

At no cost to them, local employers offer Taft College Transition to Independent Living (TIL) Program students internships where they learn work skills and gain valuable experience on the job. On May 25, TIL Program staff and students joined forces to officially thank these employer partners for the opportunities students received.



This is a monthly publication by the Taft College Office of the President. If you have feedback, comments, or questions, please contact Susan Groveman, Executive Director of Marketing and Community Relations at (661) 763-7942.

MAKE A STUDENT'S DAY