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## Administrator changes campus face through diversity

### Dean sheds stereotypical 'tough guy' mask; takes GCC under her wing

Jodi Cisman

When Glendale Community College (GCC) opened its doors in 1965, the students were primarily Caucasian. Today, people from all walks of life have come to GCC seeking post-high school education.

However, this boost in a more culturally diverse campus cannot be completely credited to these individuals. Faculty and staff have found ways to recruit a diverse student population through beneficial program offerings and techniques.

One such faculty member is Donna White, dean of Student Life.

Originally, White was interested in pursuing a career in occupational therapy; however, she was unable to find a school that offered a program for it.

"I like the medical field, she said. "I like working

with people and I love arts and crafts and finding out what people can do. That's all about using various outlooks to retrain muscle groups."

Instead, she graduated at the age of 30 with her master's degree in human resources from Ottawa University.

"I did the den mother thing through college. I was married, raised my son and I worked part-time jobs," she said. "It's not just the younger generation that has had a million jobs."

Two years later she divorced her husband and came to work at GCC as a receptionist.

"I didn't really come here with the intention of gaining a career," White said. "GCC just seemed like a good place to be."

Soon after, she was promoted to a better position at Rio Salado Community College (RSCC), as an assistant to the president.

For seven years, she moved between RSCC, GCC and Maricopa Community College District office (MCCCD), performing different positions ranging from project director to training development.

She settled at GCC in 1989 as director of Student Activity, eventually landing the position as dean of Student Life.

"I have helped people learn from their mistakes

instead of just throwing them out of school by suspension or expulsion," she said.

Since then, she has made many important contributions to the school with the intentions of improving student's educational experience.

*"The AIDS quilt is a traveling quilt project where people affected make quilt squares in memory of those they love who have died from AIDS."*

--Donna White, dean

Recently, she involved students from the new leadership class in redesigning the S.U.

"I put them into teams," she said, "and had them develop reports on what the general student population would want as far as a recreational area and what kind of machines and games they would want."

She brought a more controversial issue to the

campus in 1990 when she took a pro-active approach to HIV/AIDS awareness and STDs by passing out condoms, having information sessions and offering testing.

"Since Donna has been here, I have noticed the difference she's made," said sociology professor Eileen Johnston. "Students are getting involved in more important issues and projects rather than just their classes."

In addition, she brought the AIDS quilt to Phoenix.

"The AIDS quilt is a traveling quilt project where people affected make quilt squares in memory of those they love who have died from AIDS," White said.

Although she has accomplished many things in her 24 years with the district, she still has plans for the further development of the campus.

She wants to raise money for an art museum on campus to display the artwork student government has been purchasing since the 1960s.

"If you own a collection like that, you need to be a good caretaker," she said. "We have this beautiful collection, but we really don't have the temperature, humidity or light conditions that are optimal to maintain it."