



FOURTH ANNUAL

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# HALL OF FAME BANQUET

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Sunday, November 11, 2018



## MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT / PRESIDENT



### **Welcome to the Hall of Fame Banquet!**

This year Taft College celebrates its 97th anniversary. As a college, it took many dedicated people along the way to shape it into the truly great institution we enjoy today: dedicated individuals like our Hall of Fame inductees who gave their time, skills and commitment to make us better, stronger and wiser. I would like to personally thank them for their dedication and service to our students and community.

Additionally, I would like to recognize the work of the Hall of Fame committee for organizing tonight's event. It takes many hands to make an event like this successful and I appreciate their commitment to that end.

I hope you enjoy hearing the stories of our inductees. Together the inductees have left their indelible marks on the college that inspire us to reach higher to help our students succeed.

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**Garlyn Basham, Distinguished Administrator**  
**Leslie Dragoo, Distinguished Faculty**  
**Kathy Evarts, Distinguished Classified/Management**  
**Jeff Ross, Distinguished Faculty**  
**Ryan Heitmann, Outstanding Male Athlete**  
**Katie Fisette (Swart), Outstanding Female Athlete**  
**Brandon Rock, Outstanding Male Athlete**  
**2004 Volleyball Team, Outstanding Team**

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Many thanks for celebrating with us tonight.

**Dr. Debra S. Daniels**  
*Superintendent / President*

## MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDATION



"The Taft College Foundation is proud of our strong and committed board of directors and celebrate their innovative leadership and belief in building a strong relationship between industry and academia. We are delighted the Taft College Hall of Fame awards are highlighting a few who are also Taft College Alumni. Go Cougars, and congratulations to all of the awardees tonight!"

**Sheri Horn-Bunk, Executive Director**  
*Foundation & Institutional Advancement*

### **Mission**

The Taft College Foundation is dedicated to supporting student success through fund-raising and development of community relationships.

The Taft College Foundation was established as a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation in September 2002, for charitable purposes. It is the mission of the corporation to advance post-secondary education by supporting the programs and activities of Taft College which include, but are not limited to, providing funding for building and classroom construction, scholarships, sponsorships for books and educational materials, supplies, equipment and programs.

As part of its commitment to serving the Taft College community, donations are regularly solicited through special events, an annual fund drive, an alumni fund drive and other means of outreach to the community. Memorial funds as scholarship donations are regularly instituted in memory of loved ones.

### **Giving to Taft College**

A new instrument of giving, the Taft College Fund, was created to allow alumni, parents and friends of the college to make contributions to support current operations, scholarships, student aid, and special programs and projects.

We encourage you to stay engaged with Taft College. We hope to motivate alumni and friends to make affiliation with Taft College a lifetime commitment.

For more information about the Taft College Foundation, giving to Taft College, joining the Alumni Association, or participating in their activities, please contact Sheri Horn-Bunk at 661-763-7936 or visit [www.taftcollege.edu](http://www.taftcollege.edu). Stay connected with us on Facebook; search the Taft College Foundation!

Thank you for making a difference and for celebrating with us this evening!



# HALL OF FAME COMMITTEE

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## Hall of Fame Committee

Superintendent/President – Dr. Debra Daniels

Vice President of Students Services – Severo Balason

Management Representative – Bill Norris

Director of Athletics – Kanoe Bandy

Faculty Representatives – Darcy Bogle, Tony Thompson

Classified Representatives – Norberto Lopez, Vicky Waugh

Foundation Board Member – Jan Ashley

Community Members – Craig Johnson, Dennis McCall

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## Hall of Fame Committee Mission

Taft College Hall of Fame honors former students, teams, coaches, administrators, faculty, staff, and community members who have excelled through competition, made a difference in the lives of our students, or been strong supporters of Taft College.



*Honoring a legacy of excellence*

# FOURTH ANNUAL HALL OF FAME AWARDS BANQUET

## Champagne Reception

### Welcome and Introductions

Severo Balason  
Kanoë Bandy  
Darcy Bogle

## Dinner

### Campus Remarks

Dr. Debra Daniels, Superintendent / President  
Taft College

## Presentation of Awards

Inductee	Presenter	Award
Garlyn Basham	Jan Ashley	Distinguished Administrator
Leslie Drago	Rebecca Roth	Distinguished Faculty
Kathy Evarts	Vicky Waugh	Distinguished Classified/Management
Jeff Ross	Brock McMurray	Distinguished Faculty
Ryan Heitmann	Tony Thompson	Outstanding Male Athlete
Katie Fiset (Swart)	Kanoë Bandy	Outstanding Female Athlete
Brandon Rock	Craig Johnson	Outstanding Male Athlete
2004 Volleyball Team	Kanoë Bandy	Outstanding Team

# HALL OF FAME CATEGORIES

## **Distinguished Administrator**

Nominee must have rendered contributions to the campus community that are documented as clearly and measurably exceeding in quality and magnitude of that which might be ordinarily expected of someone occupying the same position.

## **Distinguished Alumni**

Nominee must have achieved prominence in his/her field, be recognized for significant contributions to the community or Taft College, and/or be recognized at the state or national level for extraordinary achievement.

## **Distinguished Classified / Management**

Nominee must have rendered contributions to the campus community that are documented as clearly and measurably exceeding in quality and magnitude of that which might be ordinarily expected of someone occupying the same position.

## **Distinguished Faculty**

Nominee must have rendered contributions to teaching and learning that are documented as clearly and measurably exceeding in quality and magnitude of that which might be ordinarily expected of someone occupying the same position.

## **Extraordinary Service**

Nominee must have rendered extraordinary service, leadership or support to any program at Taft College.

## **Outstanding Coach**

Nominee is a coach who has led teams to excellence through competition, and has shown that they have had a positive influence on the lives and careers of student athletes.

## **Outstanding Female and Male Athletic Achievement**

Nominee must have achieved excellence through competition while at Taft College and / or after leaving Taft College.

## **Outstanding Team Achievement**

For a team to be eligible for induction, the team must have participated in a bowl game, earned a spot in the state playoffs, and/or won either a conference or state championship.

For further information on Hall of Fame categories, nomination forms, deadlines, and selection process, please visit [www.taftcollege.edu](http://www.taftcollege.edu).

# INDUCTEES



## Garlyn Basham – Distinguished Administrator

Garlyn was raised near McKittrick on the Reward Oil Lease, attending elementary school in Fellows, then Taft Union High School (TUHS), and Taft Junior College. While attending TUHS, he enjoyed public speaking, was on the debate team, involved in the drama club, and on the track team. After graduating in 1931, Garlyn attended Taft Junior College, serving as the student body president during 1932-1933 and cheer squad.

Garlyn then took a year off of school to work for Standard Oil Company to save money to continue his education. He graduated from UCSB in 1936, and returned to Taft as an instructor for TUHS. While teaching, he continued his education at USC, earning his masters degree in 1939. Garlyn taught until 1943 when he took a leave of absence and enlisted in the Naval Reserve, where he served from 1943-1945, earning two personal citations for admirable service. After serving with distinction in the US Navy, Garlyn returned to the faculty of TUHS in 1946, and took summer courses in educational administration at UCLA and Stanford.

Garlyn was chosen as Director of Taft Junior College in 1950 (the title was later changed to President) and became the first Superintendent of the West Kern Community College District when it was formed in 1963. He continued as President and Superintendent until his retirement in 1975. Garlyn was 'home grown' and loved the West Side community and was fully immersed in it, particularly its educational system. He strived to raise Taft Junior College to statewide prominence, known for its excellence in education. During his 25 year tenure from 1950-1975 he oversaw major changes to the college including building the Taft College campus (1956-1957), dormitories, and a nationally recognized football team (NJCAA member 1965-1972). Garlyn was awarded "President Emeritus" status upon his retirement in 1975 by the College Board of Trustees, recognizing his 25 years of meritorious service to the college".



# INDUCTEES



## **Leslie Drago – Distinguished Faculty**

Leslie's career began at Taft College in 1984 when she was hired as an Early Childhood Education (ECE) Instructor and Director for Child Development Centers (both public and private). During her 20 year tenure, she did many things.

Leslie wrote a grant for building the Children's Center and began the ECE Program. She was a grant writer for 15 years, and past president of the California Community College Early Childhood Educators. Leslie was the appointed commissioner for Children and Families First Commission, and presented at county, state, and national child development conferences. In 1993, Leslie was California Woman of the Year, and was chosen for the Kern Council of Governments Distinguished Leadership Award in 1999. Nominated by senator Ken Peterson, Leslie was a founding member and one of the first commissioners for the First 5, and has completed a wealth of work over the years to align ECE curriculum at all California Community Colleges.

Leslie was a long time resident of Taft that was actively involved with advancing Taft College, as well as the surrounding community. Leslie knew how to give back, and still does to this day. Leslie currently teaches ECE courses as an adjunct at the community college level. She still loves the field, and the opportunity to teach and give back to others daily.



## **Kathy Evarts – Distinguished Classified/Management**

In 1987, Kathy began her career at Taft College working in the Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS) department. She began as a part time employee and became a full time assistant to department head Jess Ross shortly thereafter.

Kathy has made a lasting difference in the lives of adults with disabilities as a key figure in the development of the Transition to Independent Living (TIL) Program. TIL began in the fall of 1995 and continues to this day. In the early 1990s, Taft College faced a financial crisis which led to the dismantling of all athletic programs, including the hugely popular football team. It became clear as the college began bringing back athletics that football was not going to be making a return to Taft College. Kathy walked by the empty, lifeless dorms with a feeling of sadness each day, until her innovative thinking took over. Kathy approached her boss, Jeff Ross, with an idea. This idea would lead to the first of its kind, the TIL Program, benefiting adults with disabilities from all over the state.

Kathy believed these young people could be successful as independent, working individuals if given the proper guidance and training. The empty dorms were perfect to house these individuals and Taft College was the perfect community to support such an innovative program. Kathy, Jeff Ross and Linda Gaenike worked tirelessly alongside Taft College President, David Cothrun, to get the TIL program up and running. Since inception, the impact of TIL Program has been far reaching, and the opportunity it has provided students participating in the program is immeasurable. Kathy retired in 2010, leaving a lasting legacy at Taft College and an unfailing commitment to the betterment of the lives of disabled adults.



# INDUCTEES



## **Jeff Ross – Distinguished Faculty**

Jeff Ross was hired in 1976, the same year faculties of the state were allowed to form a union, which Jeff was involved in for many years. Jeff introduced the idea of 'shared governance' to Taft College, and was involved with the union for many years. Jeff headed the Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS) department for many years. He did an excellent job, and had a great relationship with state funders for the DSPS program. Kathy Evarts, who worked in the DSPS program, came up with the wonderful idea to expand DSPS into a residential program where students lived on campus. Jeff Ross ran with that idea. He produced the Transition to Independent Living (TIL) Program, a residential, two-year program that would lead students with disabilities to live a more productive and normalized lifestyle. The TIL Program was very successful and soon became a model for schools nationwide as well as overseas. We even had visitors from Korea that came to see how the program was being conducted. Jeff's guidance and leadership of the TIL Program was outstanding. Jeff has been recognized repeatedly for his work in the field, and has received numerous awards for his very meaningful and beneficial impact on Taft College. Jeff continues to be an advocate for adults with intellectual disabilities, and is well known for his ongoing contributions and success.



## **Ryan Heitmann – Outstanding Male Athlete**

Ryan attended Taft College from 1997-1999, serving as the ASB President, and playing on the baseball team as a pitcher. In 1999, Ryan earned the highest academic honor possible for the California Community College Athletic Association: Male Pepsi Scholar Athlete of the Year. Ryan is one of two such inductees this evening to have earned that honor. Along with his numerous successes both academically and athletically at Taft College, Ryan has continuously been successful personally and professionally.

Ryan transferred to Lewis Clark State College in Lewiston, ID, graduating summa cum laude and helping to lead his team to the NAIA National Championship in 2000 and 2002, along with runner-up in 2001. Ryan was an NAIA Academic All-American in 2001 and 2002, but his chances to play professional baseball were crushed when his career ended abruptly his senior year after injuring his rotator cuff.

Ryan attended medical school as part of the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HSPS) through the U.S. Army from 2003-2007 at Des Moines University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Des Moines, IA. Ryan graduated with honors, and was ranked 11th in his graduating class. During his obstetrics and gynecology residency at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, WA, Ryan received multiple awards for his research and was named best laparoscopic surgeon.

In 2011-2014, Ryan completed his reproductive endocrinology and infertility fellowship at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. During his time in fellowship, he received a few more research awards, with the most significant being the Founder's award (top award at the Armed Forces OB/GYN meeting). Since 2014, Ryan has been stationed at Madigan and has been a part of a few more award winning research projects, earning a total of 15 research awards. After returning from deployment to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Ryan recently took over as the Director (PD) of the OB/GYN Resident Program at Madigan, and is waiting promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. We are grateful to Ryan for his accomplishments and his service to our nation.

# INDUCTEES



## **Katie Swart – Outstanding Female Athlete**

Katie Swart played on the 2001 and 2002 volleyball teams. Katie came to Taft College from Las Vegas, NV. As a student athlete, here at Taft College she accomplished the highest individual honors any volleyball player could accomplish at the community college level. She was a team captain, team MVP, 2 time 1st Team All Central Valley Conference, Central Valley Conference MVP, 2 time All Northern California Team, 2 time All State Team, and 2 time JC 2nd team All American.

Academically, Katie was a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society and served as the secretary. She was on the Presidents list all 4 semesters, 2 time Central Valley Conference Scholar Athlete and 2 time California Community College Volleyball Coaches Association Scholar Athlete. Katie graduated in 2003 as the Valedictorian with the highest grade point average of her graduating class with a 4.0 GPA. Katie was then chosen in 2004 as the female COA Pepsi Scholar Athlete. This award is given to a student athlete with high academics and who has demonstrated outstanding citizenship/participation characteristics while enrolled at the college. Katie topped it off with the 2004 National Alliance for Two Year College Athletic Administrators (NATYCAA) Female Scholar Athlete Award. Katie was a member of the COA Scholar Team Award in 2002 for the Academic Accomplishments of the 2001 team. Taft College had the highest GPA of all community college volleyball teams in the state, along with winning the Central Valley Conference championship.

Katie was very involved while she was a student athlete. She served as the ASB Vice President and Student Trustee to the Board of Trustees for the college district. She organized activities such as Breast Cancer Awareness week, which not only brought awareness on our campus, but also raised money for the Susan B. Koman Foundation. She also organized a Thanksgiving food drive for needy families and a moonlight golf tournament. Also, after losing her teammate, Katie Owens to a drunk driver, Katie was instrumental in organizing the first Alcohol Awareness Month of May on our campus, sending a strong message not to drink and drive particularly on graduation night. Katie accomplished all of this while also dealing with the loss of her teammate and friend.

Katie transferred to CSU Stanislaus on a full volleyball scholarship, to pursue a degree in biological science with the goal of becoming a physician's assistant. She graduated from CSU Stanislaus in 2005 with a degree in Biology and a minor in Psychology. After graduation, Katie went back to live at home in Las Vegas, NV. She applied for the Physical Therapy school at UNLV. Katie graduated in 2011 with a Doctorate degree in Physical Therapy. She worked in a hospital in Las Vegas for about a year until she decided to move to Tuscan AZ to be closer to her fiancé Christopher whom Katie married in 2013. Katie and Christopher live in San Tan Valley, AZ so that Christopher can attend Dental School. He will graduate from Dental School in May of 2019. They have 2 children. A son Owen who is 3 and a daughter named Shelby.

# INDUCTEES



## Brandon Rock – Outstanding Male Athlete

Brandon Rock went from “deathbed” to U.S.A. Track and Field Olympian in just 4 short years! At 6-4 and 175 lbs., Brandon showed promise as a Nevada State High School Champion in the 800 meters running 1:56. “Rock” attended Taft College from 1991 to 1993. As a Taft Cougar, he competed in Track and Field and Cross Country.

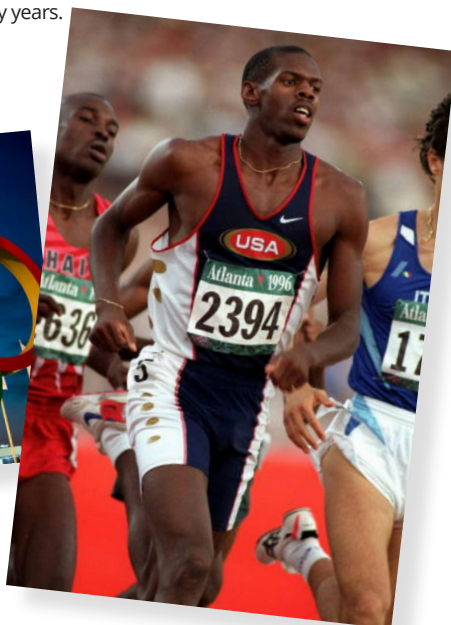
His freshman year at Taft he improved by 4 seconds running 1:52. As a sophomore Brandon just wasn't the same. He lost all strength and power. He struggled to run 2:08. Doctors revealed he had a serious kidney infection. Side effects of the prescribed medication and bedrest saw him gain 30 lbs. He continued classes at Taft but was unable to finish the season in track. Brandon told Track and Field News “One day I felt like I was going to die, so I took myself off all medications and left it up to God to see what he wanted to do with me.” A doctor later told him that he had been prescribed too much medication, and the decision to stop the medication may have saved his life. In 1993, Brandon ran 1:55 as an unattached athlete and graduated from TC.

He transferred to University of Nevada and was undefeated until nationals. He finished 8th in the NCAA and Men's USA Championships with a PR of 1:47.44. Nevada dropped their Track program and Brandon transferred to University of Arkansas. In 1995, at Arkansas he was the NCAA (1:46.37) and USA Men's National Champion (1:46.50) and finished 5th at the World Championships.

He ran a personal record of 1:44.97 to win the London Grand Prix Meet, his first race outside the U.S. while preparing for the World Championships. At the 1996 Olympic Trials in Atlanta, he ran a personal best of 1:44.64 to become the silver medalist and earn a spot on the USA Olympic Track and Field Team.

Brandon Rock earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Arkansas and has served as an inspirational speaker for many years.

Link below for Brandon's 1996 Olympic Trials Run  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3xhsrwedcM>



# TAFT COLLEGE 2004 VOLLEYBALL TEAM

The 2004 Volleyball Team was a very special team in so many ways. Two weeks into the season, Keali'i Pearl, our assistant coach, was diagnosed with a very rare type of cancer, Ewings Sarcoma. As the head coach, Kanoe Bandy had to make a decision to either step down for a season or try to take care of Keali'i and coach. Without reservation, the team wanted to stay together. With this type of determination and fight, our only option was success on the court and with Li'i's treatment protocol. This team did something no other Taft College Volleyball Team has ever done. Out of 85 community colleges with volleyball teams, they took 4th place in the State of California.

The season began in early September with two back to back sweeps. The team then took 2nd place in the San Joaquin Delta Tournament to Delta College. Taft went on to win the 20 team San Jose City College Tournament and took 1st place in the Santa Rosa JC Classic tournament. Taft did stumble a bit in the conference opener losing to Fresno City in a 5 game match. Taft finished conference with a 15-1 record and an overall record of 19-1.

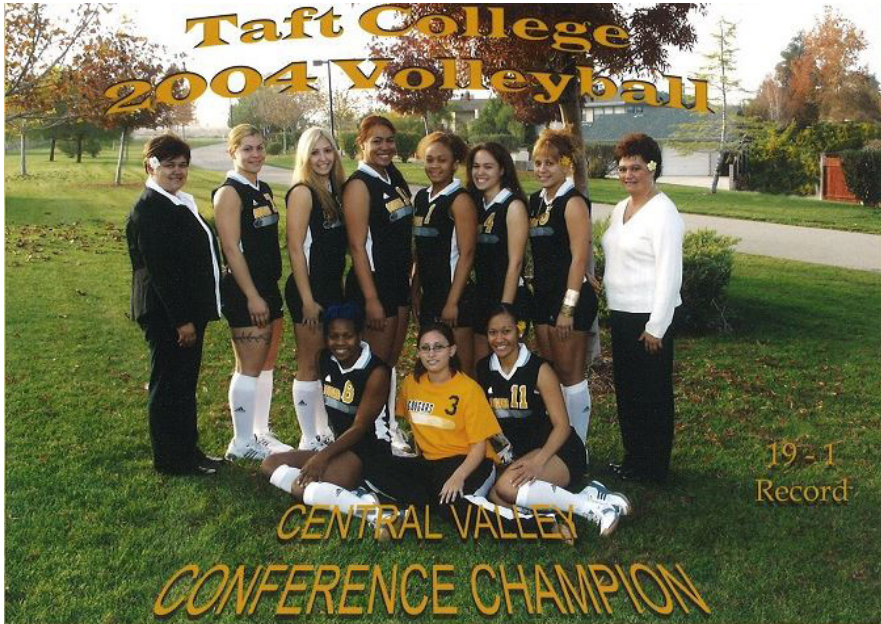
Taft College went into playoffs as the No.2 seed in NorCal. The Central Valley Conference sent 5 teams from the conference to playoffs and 3 of them were in the bracket with Taft. Taft won the 1st two rounds which sent them to the State Championships.

The performance at the State Championship was truly unbelievable. During the warm up for the first match, TC setter, Lehua Yap slipped in a puddle of water. The trainer on staff checked out Lehua's ankle and found that if she really wanted to, she could play without causing further injury. She would deal with incredible pain and swelling. He did not think she could do it. After all that Lehua had accomplished during the season, she had earned the right to make the decision whether to play or not. The team ended up losing to San Diego Mesa and had a long fight back.

That evening, Lehua had ankle treatments until 2:00 am. Treatments started again at 6:00 am. She went to the gym early that Saturday morning, on crutches, for the trainer to do additional treatments. He told Coach Bandy he had done all he could do; it is now up to Lehua. Things did not look good during warm ups; however, when submitting the lineup, Coach Bandy knew, in the back of her mind, that Lehua had earned the right to make the decision. She said, "Yes, I am setting".

TC won their two matches that day. They knew they had to play as hard as they could because when Lehua's ankle gave out, there would be no second chance. TC had made it to the Final Four. The next day during the opening match, the team played their hearts out and in the 3rd game of the match, Kaena Apana went out with a serious injury. The replacements went in, but the team had run out of gas and lost the match. The 2004 Volleyball Team had put everything they had on the line. They are the true champions. They had dealt with more challenges throughout the season than any other team. They also had to find the mental toughness just to compete at the State Championships. This season was one of the most difficult, but one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives. They walked away knowing that amongst life's chaos and challenges, they can accomplish great things.

# TAFT COLLEGE 2004 VOLLEYBALL TEAM



## COACHES

HEAD COACH: Kanoë Bandy  
ASSISTANT COACH: Kealii Pearl  
ATHLETIC TRAINER: Bruce Ferguson

## STUDENT ATHLETES

Nutter-Gaudet, Pikake  
Sotelo, Lisa  
Escobedo, Kasey  
Haia, Christi  
Yap, Lehua  
Apana, Kaena  
Baker, Norresha  
Poasa, Paepaetele  
Fonoti, Janice

# RECOGNIZING, HONORING AND TREASURING TAFT'S BEST

## Hall of Fame Class of 2017 Inductees



Brian Wellman - Outstanding Male Athletic Achievement



Juanita Perry - Distinguished Classified/Management



Donald Bandy - Distinguished Faculty and Outstanding Coach



Larry Buttke - Extraordinary Service



Jody Fischer - Outstanding Male Athletic Achievement



1985 California State Championship Track and Field Team



John M. Downer - Distinguished Administrator

*Each of these individuals and teams are an inspiration to the college, its students, and the community. Collectively, they represent the best of Taft College's spirit and character. They have influenced the values and culture of our college. Their accomplishments and contributions are a source of pride for all of us who work and learn at Taft College.*

*For a complete listing of prior inductees, please visit [www.taftcollege.edu/hall-of-fame/](http://www.taftcollege.edu/hall-of-fame/)*



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**A special thank you to our sponsors for your generosity and support!**



**Photos from event will be available online at [www.taftcollege.edu](http://www.taftcollege.edu)**