

Annual Report FY 2021

REND LAKE COLLEGE
Foundation

LIGHTING THE WAY
TODAY &
INTO THE FUTURE.

MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDATION

Dear Friends,

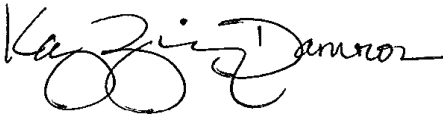
The 2020-2021 academic year was extraordinarily challenging, but with difficult challenges come inspiring opportunities to lift each other up – and that's exactly what our generous alumni, friends, and community businesses did for Rend Lake College and our students. **THANK YOU!**

Rend Lake College is truly a special place in the southern Illinois region. It's a place where students can get started, or in some cases start over, as they pursue a college education, career training, and a brighter future. Our community is a better place to live, work, and raise families because of Rend Lake College. These opportunities wouldn't be possible without people, like you, who invest in our community and our students.

The consistent support and generosity of so many throughout our community is inspiring and indispensable. This annual report vividly illustrates the impact of that support and how it improves educational opportunities for RLC students.

I hope you will continue to stay connected with RLC – visit the campus, sign up for a community education class, or attend an athletic or cultural event. This is your community college and we are so grateful to have you in our corner.

Thank you,



Kay Zibby-Damron

RLC Foundation Chief Executive Officer



DID YOU KNOW?

Recent federal legislation includes several provisions to help individuals & businesses who give to charities. Please consult your financial advisor or accountant for more information on how this applies to you.

- ✓ Individuals (including married individuals filing separate returns) can claim a deduction up to \$300 for cash contributions made to Rend Lake College Foundation, or qualifying charity during 2021.
- ✓ The deduction is increased to \$600 for married individuals filing a joint return.
- ✓ Individuals who itemize can apply an increased limit, up to 100% of their AGI (adjusted gross income), for qualified contributions made during 2021.
- ✓ Individuals age 70.5 and older can make qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) from their IRAs during 2021.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO DONORS

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your continued support of Rend Lake College and our students.

Your kindness helps RLC stay affordable, caring, and dependable. It's that spirit of giving that's made Rend Lake a resource for improving our communities through distinctive education and training options for more than 50 years. While many things have changed over the past year, one thing that has remained steadfast is Rend Lake's commitment to giving our students a quality education.

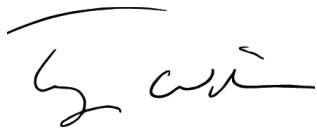
Plans for major on-campus renovations and upgrades have come to fruition. The Mary and George Slankard Learning Resource Center isn't a new building on campus — but it sure does look and feel like it! Every day we see students taking full advantage of the renovated labs, wellness room, children's library, and the state-of-the-art study spaces. What a legacy it is for the Slankard family. Everyone who contributed so generously to that project showed tremendous dedication to the college and how important local education is to our communities.

Through the Foundation, a handful of supporters came through on a new multi-purpose floor and new fitness equipment at the Wayne Arnold Recreational Center. We gathered there recently to honor Wayne and officially name the center. The place looks great. As I am sure you're aware, our student-athletes spend a lot of time in this facility. I know they are very thankful for the upgrades.

We completed a much-needed face lift for the Academic Building. That is another project that's really transformed the look of campus. Work continues to turn the former Aquatics Center into a brand-new Event Center that will better fit the needs of our campus and community.

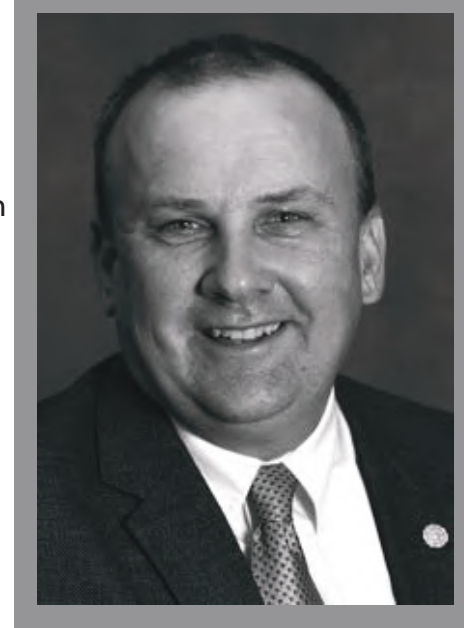
Your continued support through scholarships and donations to the Foundation puts so much possibility on the horizon for our students. There is a lot to be proud of, but there is also a lot more work to do. With your help, Rend Lake College can be even better. Thank you for working with us to be sure our students are successful on their academic journeys.

Sincerely,



Terry Wilkerson

Rend Lake College President



CREATING A LEGACY

HONORING AJ WELLEN'S SELFLESSNESS

AJ Wellen lived for the service of others. One of the last things he ever did on February 8, 2019, was to help his friends at Ron's Liquor Hut in Piopolis pump out water that had flooded the business after a heavy rainfall. Sadly, AJ died unexpectedly of a heart attack later that same day.

Now those same people AJ helped have made it possible for his legacy to continue helping others. "AJ never had a bad word to say about anyone," Lynn Bouseman, co-owner of the Liquor Hut said. "He was a really, really, really good friend to many people. With his sudden death, we wanted to do something to help. We really wanted to give back in his name."

Because of AJ's selflessness, Bouseman and other friends decided to raise money to award a scholarship in AJ's memory. Their fundraising efforts were so successful that the group was able to establish an endowed scholarship through the RLC Foundation.

The AJ Wellen Memorial Scholarship is now a perpetual scholarship that honors a life well lived through service to others and generosity. The scholarship award criteria is a full-time RLC student from Hamilton County who is enrolled in a vocational program (Ag Mechanics, Welding, Machining, Industrial Electronic & Maintenance, or Diesel Technology).

"It's so fitting that he was there with this amazing group of people who would then continue this legacy for him," AJ's wife, Natalie Wellen, said. "I just think it's an amazing opportunity for his legacy to live on. It lives on through his children, grandchildren, and everyone who loved him. But this is an additional way to honor him."

AJ Wellen graduated from Rend Lake College in 1986. Always a farmer at heart, he took night classes so he could work at Continental Tire. Natalie Wellen said he chose the off-schedule course load so he could provide for his family.

Those closest to AJ remember him as someone who would always be willing to help out anyone in need.

"They remember how funny he was," Natalie Wellen said. "He had the most amazing sense of humor and was just a sweetheart. He was always willing to help everybody and I think that's one of the great things about having the scholarship like this is in his name, he gets to continue helping people."

Ron's Liquor Hut hosts an annual AJ Memorial Fish Fry in late spring after farming season has ended. The event includes a silent auction, T-shirt and koozie sales, and a day of live entertainment.

"We have a close-knit community of friends and acquaintances who want to help out," Bouseman said. "People are very generous when it comes to the silent auction."



Wellen's family & friends know that AJ's legacy will live on through his children and grandchildren.



An avid fisherman, AJ loved an opportunity to spend time with the people in his life.



Chad Beene & Lynn Bouseman (RLC alum & co-owner, Ron's Liquor Hut) present RLCF CEO, Kay Zibby-Damron with memorial proceeds for the AJ Wellen Memorial Scholarship.

The group has also set aside funds to help purchase FFA coats for Hamilton County High School students who would not be able to buy their own.

"Giving back is probably the best thing you can do when you've lost someone who is so near and dear," Bouseman said. "Take that energy and help make the world a better place."

"It's just so cool that they thought through how to really get to what the heart of who AJ was and what he cared about. I want to

thank everyone for giving," Natalie Wellen said, "and let everyone know that there was an amazing person who started it all." ■

GIVING DAY 3.17.2021



RLC faculty & staff saying thank you to donors during Giving Day on March 17th.

THANK YOU, from the bottom of our hearts, for your support on Giving Day and every single day! There are not enough words to express how grateful we are for each and every one of you. Your love for our students continues to amaze us. Our students, faculty, and staff appreciate the support you, so selflessly, give.

#TogetherAsWarriors, YOU helped us surpass our goal! No amount is ever too small when making a difference for students' education!

Be sure to join us on March 16th for RLC Giving Day 2022!

#TogetherAsWarriors we *can* make a difference. ■

211 DONATIONS

\$10,367

Strategic Priorities Fund

\$5,295

Student Scholarships

\$870

We Are Warriors

\$561

RLC Programs

\$437

Facility Enhancements

Total Raised:

\$17,530

SHINING BRIGHT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

On September 17th, Rend Lake College held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the recently renovated Mary and George Slankard Learning Resource Center on the main campus. The building was renamed by the RLC Board of Trustees in April to celebrate and honor the late George and Mary Slankard of Sesser, who were longtime supporters of education and devoted significant financial and moral support for the mission of Rend Lake College.

It was the Slankards who gave the lead gift to the RLC Foundation's HUB Learning Resource Center fundraising campaign in 2019 to expand and renovate the college's Learning Resource Center. The Slankards also made provisions in their estate to leave a substantial planned gift to the RLC Foundation to create scholarships for students.

The Slankards' connection to RLC goes back over two decades ago when George Sankard was first elected to the RLC Foundation Board of Directors in 1997. He was named an Emeritus member in June 2017 and is one of only five members to receive this prestigious status.

George Slankard was a 1943 graduate of Goode-Barren Township High School. After he graduated from the University of Illinois and Southern Illinois University, he would follow in his father's footsteps in publishing by running the C&H Publishing Co. and Slankard Publishing. Those publications included The Sesser Review newspaper (1941-1960), Cars & Parts, The Lunker Hole, Outdoor Illinois, Whistle, American Cooner, and Hunter's Horn.

Mary Slankard taught English at Sesser-Valier High School, and she was often revered as one of the best teachers many students had ever had. She also inspired many of her former students to pursue teaching as a career because of the influence she had in their lives.

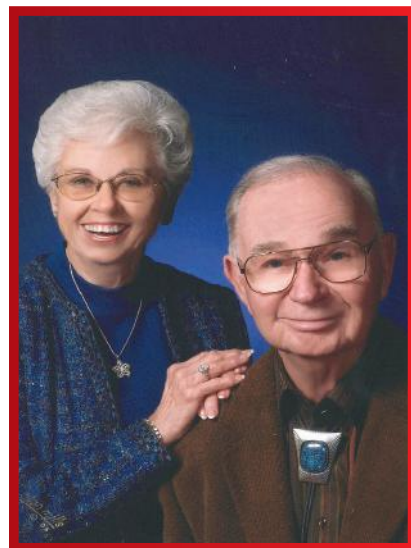
The Slankards met while they were both educators at Sesser-Valier and became pillars of the community. They were married for nearly seventy years before George passed in March 2020 at 95 years old and Mary Slankard, age 91, passed away nine months later in December.

"There's no doubt how passionate the Slankards were about the importance of education. They dedicated their entire lives to learning – whether it was work-related or interest-related, George and Mary were always reading and learning," said Kay Zibby-Damron, RLC Foundation CEO. "They often talked about their concern for the future of our region and wanted to ensure there were educational opportunities for area students."

Longtime family friend and RLC Board of Trustee member Randall Crocker said he believed the Slankards exemplified the famous quote from Gandhi that stated, "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." Everything they believed in, he said, was in the pursuit of making things better for those around them.

"I often thought that George's contribution [to the Learning Resource Center] was because he knew his life was coming to an end," Crocker said. "[The Slankards] saw a way to contribute to something that will allow them to live forever."

George and Mary Slankard were incredibly kind and generous friends. Their legacy will remain strong at RLC and in the southern Illinois region for generations to come. ■



The late Mary and George Slankard, the namesakes of the newly renovated Learning Resource Center.



Expansion of floor space created 6 collaborative learning study rooms.



Enhancement of Career Tech Education computer lab.



Creation of a Wellness Room to provide a quiet & therapeutic place for students.



Enhancement of Career Tech Student Success Center.



New Children's Library for future Warriors to read and learn.

Below: Mary & George Slankard Learning Resource Center ribbon-cutting event on Friday, September 17th.



MAKE AN IMPACT

Whether you wish to inspire an RLC student, honor or remember someone who's inspired you, or support academic or extracurricular programs, the Rend Lake College Foundation is here to help make your giving experience enjoyable and rewarding. There are many ways to support RLC students!

💡 ESTABLISH A SCHOLARSHIP

There are options to have your gift make an impact today & into the future.

💡 MAKE AN ANNUAL PLEDGE OR GIFT

Your gift to RLC Foundation's Strategic Priorities Fund supports RLC's highest priorities including student scholarships, student emergency funds, student technology & programming, and campus facility improvements.

💡 SUPPORT AN ANNUAL EVENT

Our Annual Golf Outing, Foundation Annual Dinner, and Student Scholarship Banquet offer a range of giving opportunities to highlight you or your business in fun & exciting ways.

💡 ATTEND AN ANNUAL OR RLC STUDENT EVENT

RLC alumni and friends are invited to participate in college and Foundation sponsored events. Our Warrior teams, programs, and student clubs & activities would love to have your support at an athletic event, theatre production, musical performance, culinary arts showcase, or any event promoting RLC students.

💡 COME BACK TO CAMPUS

Your time is a gift too! Maybe you have professional experience worth sharing with our students. We also are grateful for volunteers to help with events & serve on committees.

MR. A'S LEGACY

CARING FOR HIS CORNER OF THE WORLD

Gene "Mr. A" Alexander is someone so special that he only has to be referred to by one letter to be recognized. And now he has been awarded with his own day at Rend Lake College. At the September Board of Trustees meeting, the RLC Trustees passed a resolution naming September 22, 2021 as Mr. A Day to acknowledge his dedication and significant support to RLC students.

The "Mr. A Day" celebration was held Wednesday afternoon on the RLC campus where students, faculty, staff, and community members came out to meet, greet, and show their gratitude toward the longtime educator and Benton native for all he has done to help promote educational pursuits for local students. Lunch was provided by the RLC Foundation.

"It was quite a surprise," Alexander said. "I got a chance to meet a lot of



RLC President Terry Wilkerson presents Mr. A the resolution naming September 22nd as Mr. A Day.



Mr. A with Lucas Prior (Benton) one of Alexander's 60 scholarship recipients of 21-22.

RLC President Terry Wilkerson said it is hard to put in words the difference Mr. A's contributions have made in the lives of hundreds of RLC students.

"Mr. A personifies paying it forward," Wilkerson said. "He has given his life and his investments. He didn't spend it on himself. He spends it on the kids and the future. You want to see it in action and see it in person? You can actually see it in him. It's hard to put into words what he is doing for our students and what he's doing for this college."

Several RLC students donned specially made

students and talk with them. It's been a great day."

Since 2017, Mr. A's generous contributions have helped more than 350 students with scholarships, initially set up for Benton High School graduates, and now expands to RLC students from Franklin County.

"Mr. A is simply amazing. He is always looking for ways in which he can help because he has never forgotten how he was helped along his educational journey. Mr. A's impact on his corner of the world is so significant and has been such a blessing to RLC and our students," said Kay Zibby-Damron, CEO of the RLC Foundation.



A group of scholarship recipients listens as Mr. A discusses his start in education during the Mr. A celebration on the Rend Lake College campus.

red bucket hats to pay tribute to Alexander's special style. They were also given the chance to thank Mr. A in person for helping them start their academic journey.

Audrey Gulley, a freshman from Sesser, who is studying political science and pre-law, said she felt honored to receive one of Mr. A's scholarships this year. She said because of the support she has received from financial awards, she has been able to save up for her first year of law school.

"I really appreciate everything that he has done for the community," Gulley said. "Education is really important to my family and for me as a second-generation college student. People like Mr. A help me to be able to go to school and pursue my passion."

"It makes you feel like you have got people rooting you on, someone to support you and someone who wants you to finish school and get your degree," said Reed Raubach, a sophomore from Thompsonville studying IT security.

Alexander said he is glad he is in a position to help so many people. Recently, Mr. A made a large contribution to his existing endowment to ensure the young students at Benton Elementary School will have scholarships when they come to RLC. "This is just another example of how Mr. A's generosity will impact future generations," said Zibby-Damron.

"You're making a positive difference in someone's life," Alexander said. "It's a good feeling." ■



RLC faculty, staff, and members of the community join scholarship recipients in celebrating Mr. A on Wednesday, September 22, 2021 during the first Mr. A Day.



*Culinary Arts student,
Ryan Grayson*



*Elementary Education student,
Anna Miller*



*Cosmetology student,
Cassie Richardson*

FY 21 FINANCES



This financial information is from the fiscal year 2021, ending June 30, 2021.

ASSETS

Cash & Cash Equivalents.....	\$513,656
Accounts Receivable.....	\$10,180
Investments.....	\$5,507,664
Unconditional Promises to Give, Less Allowances for Uncollectible Promises.....	\$296,517
Property & Equipment, Net of Depreciation.....	\$22,247
Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trust.....	\$491,790
TOTAL ASSETS	\$6,842,054

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable.....	\$39,181
Due to Rend Lake College.....	\$365,000
Total Liabilities.....	\$404,181
Net Assets without Donor Restriction.....	\$744,022
Net Assets with Donor Restriction.....	\$5,693,851
Total Net Assets.....	\$6,437,873
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$6,842,054



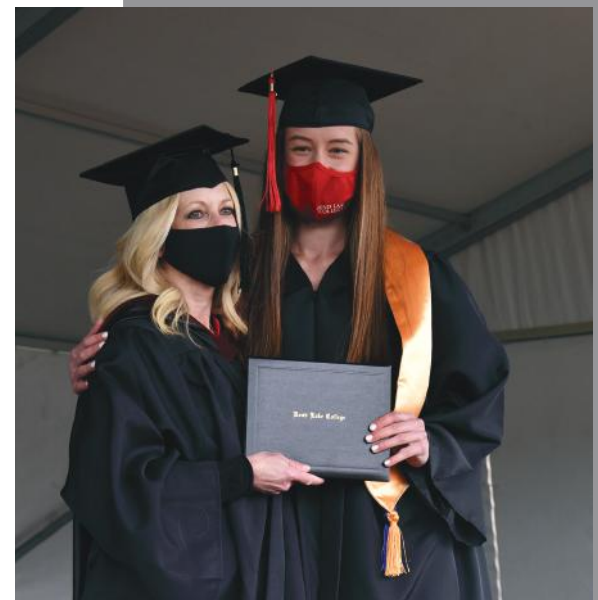
Sophia & Sarah Issler (Pinckneyville) and Abby Witzel (Woodlawn) haul boxes of fresh produce to cars during RLC's Mobile Market event.



Nursing student, Julie Baumgarte (Christopher) aids in COVID-19 vaccination administration in spring of 2021.



Team American Fitness earned first-place during the 40th Annual RLC Foundation Golf Outing. Team members included: Shane Dyel, Diane Daugherty, Jason McKinnes, Danielle Kaufman, Vicki Rowland, & Trent Hudgens.



Kenzie Rushing (Pinckneyville) receives her associate's degree presented by her mother, Financial Aid Director, Cheri Rushing.

SCHOLARSHIP IMPACT

A STUDENT'S JOURNEY

Winter Pittman has big aspirations. She intends to have a career not “just a job” as an elementary special education teacher. The RLC sophomore from Mount Vernon desires to become the kind of teacher she knows is needed in the world - one who is caring, patient, and willing to be an advocate for students.

“All I have ever wanted is to be a teacher,” Winter said.

Winter’s desire to help students in the classroom is just an example of her determination to overcome challenges and her nature to help others.

Winter knows all too well about challenges. At the tender age of 9, Winter lost her mother in a tragic accident. She and her younger brother, Joseph, who is disabled and requires full-time care, went to live with their grandparents.

THE BOND OF A SISTER & BROTHER

The bond between Winter and Joseph is tight, and Winter intends to be Joseph’s caretaker into adulthood. “It has always been [Joseph and me],” she said. “I have only gone without seeing him for three weeks his entire life. I don’t think I could be without him. He is the reason why I want to go into special education.”

Winter is also determined to be the first person in her family to earn a college degree. Knowing her grandparents might not be able to pay for college, she applied for scholarships through the RLC Foundation to get additional help with her tuition and books.

Winter appreciates being given a chance to pursue higher education. “Having a scholarship [last year and this year] has been the best thing,” said Winter. “It’s a weight off my shoulders. Even though I work, it’s not enough to pay for college.”

Winter’s story and her motivation for success is merely one example of the challenges many RLC students face while trying to create a better life for themselves. “Being able to help students on their journey is a priority for the RLC Foundation,” said Kay Zibby-Damron, RLC Foundation CEO. “Without the generous donor support for our scholarship program from alumni, friends, and community businesses, we simply wouldn’t be able to provide as many opportunities for deserving and hard-working students, like Winter.” ■



Winter and her brother Joseph. Winter intends to care for Joseph throughout his adult life.



SAVE THE DATE



2022 GIVING DAY

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

The one day alumni, students, faculty, staff, friends, and family unite to support Rend Lake College.



2022 GOLF OUTING

Thursday, September 8, 2022

Rend Lake Golf Complex



2022 SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

Thursday, October 20, 2022

Location to be determined



RECEIVE UPDATES

Follow us on social media!

@rlcfoundation

GIVE NOW

Donations to the RLC Foundation can always be made online for no additional fee. Simply visit rlc.edu/give-now.



Lighting the
way today &
into the future.

REND LAKE COLLEGE
Foundation

468 North Ken Gray Parkway
Ina, Illinois 62846
(618) 437-5321

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