

Accomplished cousins chose BC3, trustee tells hundreds

April 4, 2017



Joseph E. Kubit, 54, of Cabot, a trustee at Butler County Community College, addresses a crowd in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg during Lobby Day on April 4, 2017. Kubit earned an associate degree in secondary education from BC3, and from the University of Pittsburgh, a bachelor of science degree in psychology and from its School of Law, a law degree.

(Harrisburg, PA) An anesthesiologist in Fayetteville, N.C., a prosthodontist in Erie, an airline's director of engineering in St. Paul, Minn., a Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency service representative in Butler, an engineer-in-charge of the Academy Awards in Moorpark, Calif., and an attorney in Butler have two things in common:

They are the cousins Kubit.

And they began their journeys to the apex of their professions at Butler County Community College.

“A lot of folks who have passed through the college have been tremendously blessed by it,” says Joseph E. Kubit, a Butler attorney who graduated from BC3 in 1984. “Many lives have been changed by the people who comprise BC3 in a positive way.”

The Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges selected Kubit, in his second year as a BC3 trustee and 27th as an attorney, to address hundreds of students, faculty, administrators and lawmakers as a featured speaker at Lobby Day on April 4 at the state Capitol.

Lobby Day, said Danielle Gross, the commission’s director of public affairs, “raises awareness with elected officials about the impact community colleges have on the commonwealth, and advocates for funding in the state budget.”

Joining Kubit as a featured speaker were Scott Duffy, a Delaware County Community College student who succeeds BC3’s Maizee Zaccone as the 2017 New Century Scholar; and Thomas P. Leary, Luzerne County Community College president and chair of the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.

“Pennsylvania’s 14 community colleges are blessed with outstanding boards, alumni, faculty, staff and students,” said Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3 president. “For BC3 to have a featured speaker for the second year in a row speaks to our quality as an institution and leader in the commonwealth.”

Like Zaccone, Duffy was named Pennsylvania’s New Century Scholar by achieving the state’s highest score in the All-USA Community College Academic Team competition.

“High-quality students who make an impact”

Kubit, who addressed the crowd at an 11 a.m. press conference in the Main Rotunda, need look no further than his own family for the success stories he attributes to BC3, of cousins Victor in Fayetteville, Arlene in Erie, Tony in St. Paul, Michaelene in Butler and brother Tim in Moorpark. All graduated from BC3 except Arlene, who attended for a year before transferring to the University of Pittsburgh to study microbiology.

“Joe Kubit is an incredible example of what our institution of higher education produces – high-quality students who make an impact in society,” Neupauer says. “What makes the story even better is all of those in his family who also started at BC3.”

The Knoch High graduate also earned a bachelor of science degree in psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, and from its School of Law, a law degree.

“The latter part of my high school years is when I started to get more serious about my studies,” says Kubit, 54, of Cabot. “I focused on attending BC3 and working part time. I had a plan. And I was grateful to be surrounded by professors and staff at the college who were very interested in me as a person and in helping me reach my goals.”

“Profs know you by your first name”

“That is one of the things that I think is a blessing about the community college and for students who come to school at the college. They are being taught by people who are experts in their field, in small classes. When they see you in the student union or out and about, these professors know you by your first name.”

Kubit would later find himself in the same classroom with those who attended pricier institutions. It’s a story of different paths to the same destination that resonated last fall with Gross, who met Kubit at a trustees’ meeting in Johnstown.

“He talked about going to law school and being in seats next to students who started out at Ivy League schools, and he talked about the great foundation that BC3 gave him,” Gross said. “So we thought that he had a great story and asked him if he would mind sharing at Lobby Day.”

It’s an honor that ranks highly with Kubit, along with arguing cases before Pennsylvania’s Superior and Supreme courts and serving as a BC3 trustee.

“I wanted the opportunity to give back,” Kubit says of his interest in becoming one of the 15 BC3 trustees appointed by Butler County commissioners for six-year terms.

“My years at BC3 were fabulous. I was blessed tremendously by the relationships that I formed there, professors who were interested in me, who challenged me and encouraged me, that invested their lives in mine.”

At Lobby Day, he spoke about BC3, about Cousin Vic, Cousin Arlene, Cousin Tony, Cousin Michaelene and Brother Tim. And his own journey to success.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to tell folks about my experience at BC3,” Kubit says, “to have an opportunity to vocalize some of the benefits of attending a community college, so that others might be encouraged to explore a community college also.”