

BUILDING A FUTURE: RANDY HUNTSMAN’S STORY AS ONE OF HOCKING’S FIRST GRADUATES



As students return to Hocking College this fall, they join a long and proud tradition. But for Randy Huntsman, that tradition began at the very start; he was a member of Hocking’s first-ever graduating class in 1970.

Randy, who grew up in Zanesville, Ohio, first learned about Hocking, then called Tri-County Technical Institute, through his high school. The timing couldn’t have been better. Zanesville’s own technical college hadn’t opened yet, and Randy wasn’t sold on the idea of going straight to a four-year university.

“I was a car guy. I didn’t know if traditional college was right for me at the time,” he said. “My mom, who was a single mother, helped me find a different path. She was really involved and wanted me to find something that would keep me interested and learning.”

That “different path” turned out to be a brand-new school in Nelsonville. So new, in fact, that when he went down for his admissions interview, the school itself wasn’t finished, Randy recalled. He and his mother met with the then-Hocking president, John J. Light, in what he remembered as a repurposed farmhouse that served as the college’s first office building.

The origins of Hocking College date back to the fall of 1968, when the Tri-County Technical Institute (TCTI) officially opened its doors on the campus of the Tri-County Joint Vocational School, which is now the Tri-County Career Center. Created to provide technical training for high school graduates and local residents, TCTI employed 28 instructors and welcomed 234 students in its first year. In 1969, the Ohio Board of Regents granted the institute a charter to confer degrees in 13 technical programs.

When Randy arrived at Hocking in 1968, he recalls there were no dormitories or formal student housing options. But thanks to his determined mother, that didn’t stop him from enrolling. “She found a small, used 25-foot camper trailer for sale up near Logan,” Randy said. “Then she arranged to have it hauled down and parked in a little trailer lot.”

That trailer became his home base during the week. He stayed there Monday through Friday, then returned home to Zanesville on weekends. Other students found similar arrangements, renting rooms in town or sharing houses with classmates.

“It wasn’t a traditional college setup,” he said, “but it worked. It gave me a place to focus and stay close to campus. And honestly, it made the whole experience feel personal and kind of special.”

Today, the lot where it once sat has changed. Randy explained it’s now the site of a Family Dollar store, but he still remembers it as the humble beginning of a journey that would shape his life and career.

Randy enrolled in a technical program focused on industrial engineering, where he developed a passion for drafting, hydraulics, and applied mechanics. The instructors left a lasting impression, especially one he remembered, named Ingram Smith, who he said was known by his colleagues as “Ink.”

“Mr. Smith was great. He really cared about the students. He let us help design the layout of the new drafting lab when the college started expanding,” Randy said. “We weren’t just students, we were contributors.”

Although the college was still in its infancy, it had a strong focus on community. Randy recalls that the administration even opened evening courses for local residents and invited tech students to take part. Randy, naturally, jumped at the opportunity.

“I took an auto body class and a welding course in the evenings just because I wanted to,” he said. “Anything to do with cars, I was in.”

Randy graduated in June of 1970, part of a history-making class of 117 students, the largest graduating class for a technical institute in Ohio at the time. That same decade, the school continued to grow and evolve. In 1971, TCTI adopted its first formal mission statement focused on providing para-professional technical education to high school graduates of all ages. Just one year later, in 1972, the school officially changed its name to Hocking Technical College, a name that would eventually become Hocking College.

After earning his associate degree, Randy served six months of active duty with the Air National Guard. When he returned home, he hit a common roadblock for technical graduates of that era: explaining the value of an associate degree.

“Back then, not everyone understood what a two-year technical degree meant,” he said. “There was a lot of confusion and a little resistance from employers who only saw four-year college grads as engineers.”

Despite the challenge, Randy landed a job at a local power company, where he worked for five years. But he always knew he wanted more.

“I never gave up on the idea of going back to school,” he said.

Eventually, Randy enrolled at Ohio University through its 2+2 transfer program, allowing him to build on his associate degree and earn a bachelor’s in Industrial Technology. After graduating, he landed a role with Carrier Air Conditioning as a junior manufacturing engineer, finally putting his technical skills to work in his dream field.

He spent 15 years with Carrier, 12 years at a facility in Ohio, followed by three years at a new plant in Jacksonville, Florida. After both locations were shut down as part of the company’s consolidation efforts, he was offered a role with one of Carrier’s equipment suppliers in North Georgia. He quickly rose through the ranks to become plant manager, and during the last decade of his career, he split his time between Georgia and a new manufacturing facility in Saltillo, Mexico.

In 2017, after decades in engineering and manufacturing, Randy retired, but never forgot where it all began.

Recently, Randy returned to Hocking’s campus. What began as

a quick stop to update his alumni contact information turned into something more meaningful. He ended up reconnecting with the college’s communications team and shared his story, reflecting on how much the school and the world has changed.

“The new campus is incredible. It’s not even in the same location where I studied,” Randy said. “But the heart of the college, the mission to help people build a future, is still there.”

For today’s students starting their own journey at Hocking, Randy offers encouragement grounded in experience. “Stick with your goals,” he said. “Even if it feels like the path takes a detour, stay the course. Hocking gave me the foundation I needed. It took time, but I got where I wanted to be.”

Randy also emphasized the importance of starting small and building up, something he now encourages his own grandson to consider as he approaches high school graduation.

“You don’t have to jump into a four-year school right away. Community colleges like Hocking are a smart, affordable way to find your path,” he said. “And the education is real. It sticks with you.”

Being part of Hocking’s first graduating class holds special meaning for Randy. It marked the beginning of his professional journey, but also connected him to the college’s earliest efforts to provide technical education and opportunity to students across southeast Ohio.

“It wasn’t a large campus, but it gave us the tools we needed,” he said. “We were part of the foundation, and that experience shaped the direction of my life.”

CAMPUS EVENTS

HOCKING COLLEGE

EVERY WEDNESDAY

BINGO NIGHT

4 PM DOORS OPEN
BINGO STARTS AT 6 PM

BINGO

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72

BINGO

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72

HOCKING COLLEGE

HOCKING AUTO TECH CLUB

THE CANAL CAR SHOW

Street Cruise

ENTRY \$20

SEPTMBER 27TH

CAR SHOW: 1-4PM CRUISE TO FOLLOW

HOCKING COLLEGE

THE LODGE AT HOCKING COLLEGE 15770 ST. RT. 691, NELSONVILLE, OH 45764

MUSIC • FOOD • VENDORS • RAFFLE

HTTPS://HOCKINGCOLLEGE.REGFOX.COM/THE-CANAL-CAR-SHOW-STREE-CRUISE

12th Annual

Wailin' Wayne

THE DIRTY DOZEN

FEDITION

Sept. 3 - 7, 2025

FROM THE FRONT DESK TO FINE DINING: VANY LEAVES A LASTING IMPRESSION AT HOCKING COLLEGE

Whether welcoming guests at the Admissions Office, serving comfort food from the Hawks Nest food truck, or delivering five-star service at Rhapsody Restaurant, Vany has become a familiar and admired face across Hocking College.

A standout student in the Hospitality & Culinary Arts program, Vany has worn many hats during her time at Hocking—but it's her exceptional service and heartfelt dedication that truly set her apart. She was nominated for several graduate awards this year, served as the student speaker at the Hocking College summer commencement and will soon begin an exciting new chapter working at Disney.

At Rhapsody, Hocking College's student-run fine dining restaurant, Vany has earned consistent praise from guests for her next-level service, warmth, and professionalism. Diners have called their experiences "out of this world," applauded

her ability to juggle multiple roles without missing a beat.

As one guest, dining while on a honeymoon getaway, describes Vany as "an AMAZING server" and noted, "NONE OF [the restaurants in NYC, Boston, or Chicago] COME CLOSE to the level of service and culinary prowess" at Rhapsody.

Through it all, Vany remains grounded in gratitude.

"I love this community," she said. "I will never forget walking in the Parade of the Hills, serving the community at Rhapsody who felt more like family than customers, and some of the instructors and mentors I have met along the way that made being a Hawk truly special."

As she heads to Disney, Vany takes with her the skills, spirit, and heart that made her a treasured part of the Hocking community—and an example of what it means to soar.



HOCKING COLLEGE HOSTS MAJOR NATIONAL ARCHERY EVENT

Hocking College proudly welcomed the third leg of the International Bowhunting Organization's (IBO) National Championship Triple Crown Series from July 10-13. From rain, mud, heat, and humidity—the Hocking team was there for IBO members every step of the way, providing outstanding support throughout the weekend.

Now in its 41st year, the IBO Triple Crown is one of the most prestigious 3-D archery competitions in the country. Archers from across the U.S. competed in divisions based on age, gender, and equipment, with scores contributing to the overall national championship standings.

Spectators walked the outdoor course to follow the action, enjoyed local food trucks, and browsed vendor booths—all set against the scenic backdrop of Hocking's Nelsonville campus.



Hocking College recently hosted Circle Round the Square, a free summer arts and wellness camp for students in grades 6-12. Now in its 19th year, the program provides at-risk youth with hands-on experiences in ceramics, photography, painting, fashion, digital arts, leadership, and more. The weeklong camp is designed to build creative skills, boost self-esteem, and foster positive peer connections through the arts. Campers explored new passions and created lasting memories—all on Hocking's Nelsonville campus.




Hocking College will welcome new students to campus on Tuesday, Aug. 13, during Move-In Day. Families and staff will be on hand to help students settle into their residence halls as the fall semester kicks off




Don't wait! August 17 is the last day to register for fall classes. Get started now at hocking.edu/you.

HOCKING COLLEGE HAWKS FOOTBALL	
8/30 1PM	OHIO VALLEY CCC
9/6 1PM	@HUDSON VALLEY CC
9/13 1PM	@ COLLEGE OF DUPAGE
9/20 1PM	CCC DETROIT
9/27 1PM	@ NAASSAU CC
10/4 1PM	ERIE CC
10/11 1PM	@ CCC DETROIT
10/18 1PM	COLLEGE OF DUPAGE
10/25 1PM	HOWARD HUSKIES PREP
11/1 1PM	@ERIE CC
11/8 12PM	LEAD PREP




STUDENT CLUBS



Student Clubs Help Hocking STUDENTS THRIVE

At Hocking College, student clubs and organizations play a vital role in helping students build friendships, discover new interests, and develop skills that support both personal growth and career readiness. From service and faith-based groups to creative, wellness, and STEM-focused clubs, there's something for every student to get involved, feel connected, and make the most of their college experience.

To explore the full list of clubs and organizations, visit: www.hocking.edu/get-involved-at-hocking-college#clubs



IMPORTANT DATES

Mon, August 11 - Fri., August 15
▶ Start Week

Sun, August 17
▶ Last Day to Register (16-week courses/first 8-week courses)

Mon, August 18
▶ Autumn Term Begins (16-week courses/first 8-week courses)

Mon, September 1
▶ Holiday - Labor Day - College Closed

Wed, September 3 - Sun, September 7
▶ Wailin Wayne Weekend

Fri, September 12 - Sun, September 14
▶ PAW PAW Festival at Lake Snowden

Fri, September 12
▶ Autumn Graduation Application Due
▶ Last Day to Order Caps and Gowns