

## Tassels Turned: MCC Graduates 1480

A total of 1514 degrees and certificates were awarded to 1480 students by Middlesex County College Thursday, May 17 at the 51st annual Commencement exercises witnessed by approximately 3500 guests at the Rutgers Athletic Center.

Valedictorian Sindhu Murthy delivered the class welcome, sharing her experiences and aspirations. Ms. Murthy, who graduated in January and is now attending Rutgers University, was a physics major.

**More photos:  
See page 3  
& [middlesexcc.edu/  
commencement](http://middlesexcc.edu/commencement)**

“This school has been a springboard for many of us; it has helped us launch ourselves toward the future in ways we never imagined,” she told the class. “We have achieved this milestone after bouts of uncertainty, toil and strain. I have shared classrooms with people struggling

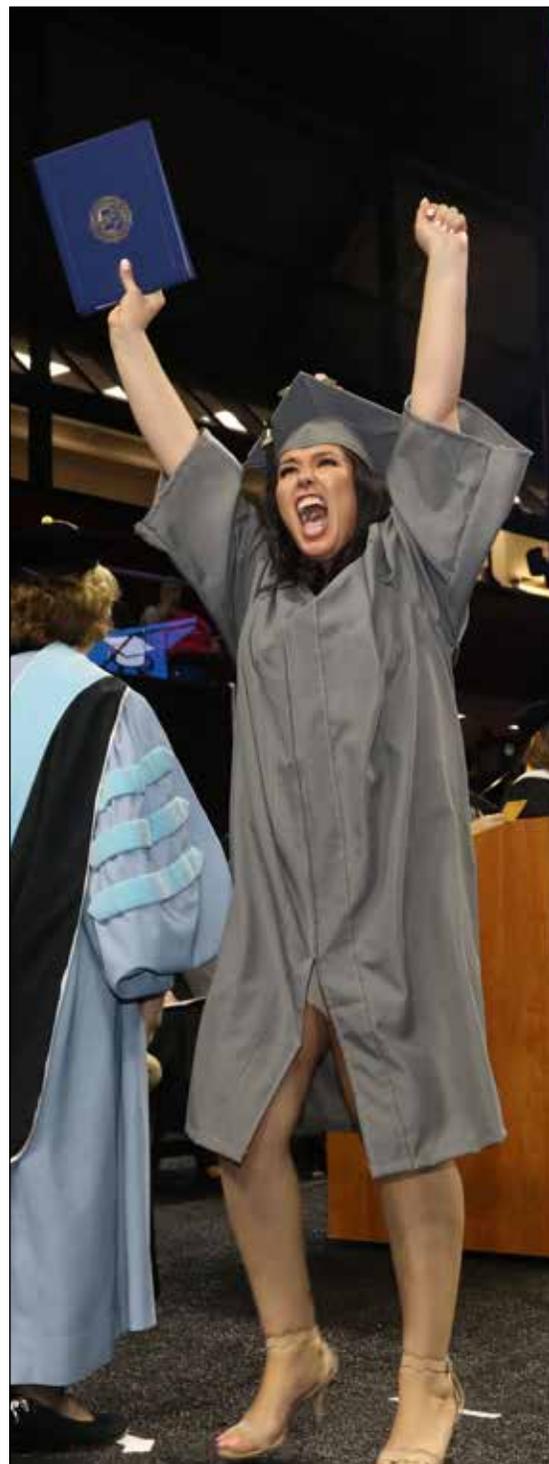
with multiple jobs, illness, and financial distress who still took the time and effort to work their way toward college graduation. This is a small yet momentous investment toward our dreams, so let us celebrate it. It is also important that we continue to maintain hope and ambition in the future. Some of us have dreams while many of us don’t know what we want to do, but what really matters is that we make the most out of this education.”

Approximately 725 members of the Class of 2018 participated in the exercises, representing the 333 graduates of August 2017, 422 of January 2018 and 725 of May 2018. Participants included several students who fulfilled the requirements for more than one degree or certificate during this academic year.

Mark McCormick, vice president for academic and student affairs, presided. Greetings were delivered by Joann La Perla-Morales, College president; Dorothy K. Power, chairman of the Board of Trustees; and Ronald G. Rios, Freeholder director.

The ceremony was the end of an era: Professor Robert Colburn, the last remaining member of the College’s 1966 original faculty, led the academic procession as grand marshal. He is retiring this year.

Dr. McCormick presented the candidates for graduation and Dr. La Perla-Morales conferred the degrees and certificates. Earlier in May, the College held an honors convocation for students with the highest academic achievement in each program. MCC also presented the Chambers Awards to graduates with the highest grade point average. They include Ms. Murthy; the salutatorian, Jamie N. Donato; and Marvi Niaz Abbasi, Jeanna T. Alemany, Justine Burnett, Eunice S. Camerino, Samantha Marie Casano, Vinnicius B. Coelho, Harpreet Kaur, Heather R. Kelleman, Rocio A. Mantilla, Kaelyn Patel and Anthony A. Pensak.





Four students were inducted into the MCC Chapter of Alpha Mu Gamma, the honor society for foreign language study. From left: Caroline Fernández, Stephanie Rossel-Martínez and Rafaela Báez. Not pictured: Adelainy Bourdier. In addition, Denise Crawford-Johnson, who is retiring as assistant in the English as a Second Language Department, received an honorary membership. The program included remarks from Chairperson Gary Abbott, Dean Linda Scherr, and Professors Virgil Blanco and Juan Saborido.

## MCC Students Win Awards at Science Conference

Three students won awards at two recent science conferences.

Josh Alb was awarded second place at the William Paterson Undergraduate Research Symposium April 14 in the biochemistry category for his poster “Identifying Cannabinoid Interaction with the CB1 Receptor.” In this project, he uses computer modeling to explain how drugs interact with the body.

Mr. Alb also spoke on the same subject at the STEM C2 Research Summit at Bergen Community College the day before. At this event, two MCC students, Lois Twumb-Barimah and Anusha Gunti, also won second place for their poster looking at disease-causing bacteria in water samples. Eleven students from chemistry and biology classes, along with several members of the STEM Club (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics),

presented posters at the summit. Another student, Eujin Lim also spoke at the summit on Designing Molecules to Inhibit Mycobacterium Tuberculosis, in which he used computer modeling to show how drugs can be used to stop tuberculosis.



From left: Anusha Gunti, Josh Alb and Lois Twumb-Barimah.

### THIS MONTH AT MIDDLESEX

This Month at Middlesex is a publication of Middlesex County College  
2600 Woodbridge Ave., Edison, NJ 08837

#### Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders

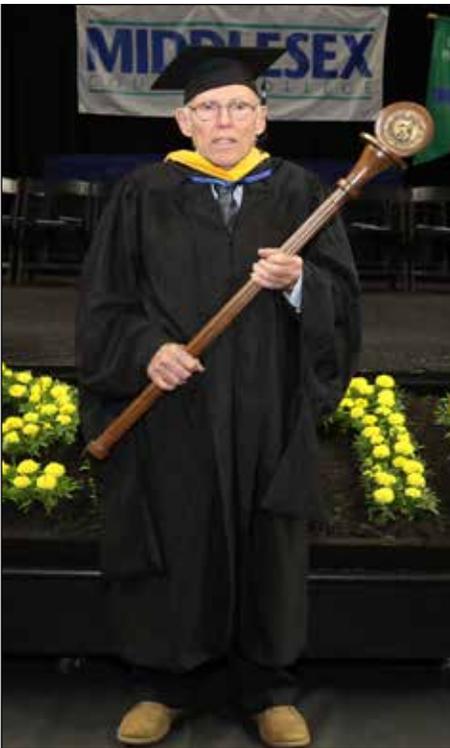
Ronald G. Rios, <i>Freeholder Director</i>	Charles Kenny
Charles E. Tomaro, <i>Deputy Director</i>	Leslie Koppel
Kenneth Armwood	Shanti Narra
	Blanquita Valenti

#### Middlesex County College Board of Trustees

Dorothy K. Power, <i>Chairman</i>	Christine Buteas
Mark J. Finkelstein, <i>Vice Chairman</i>	Roger W. Daley
Eileen Palumbo '78, <i>Treasurer</i>	Yasmin E. Hernandez-Manno
Robert P. Sica, <i>Secretary</i>	Robert Oras
Samantha Brannigan '17	Praful Raja
	Gary Taffet
Joann La Perla-Morales, <i>President</i>	

### Radiography Award

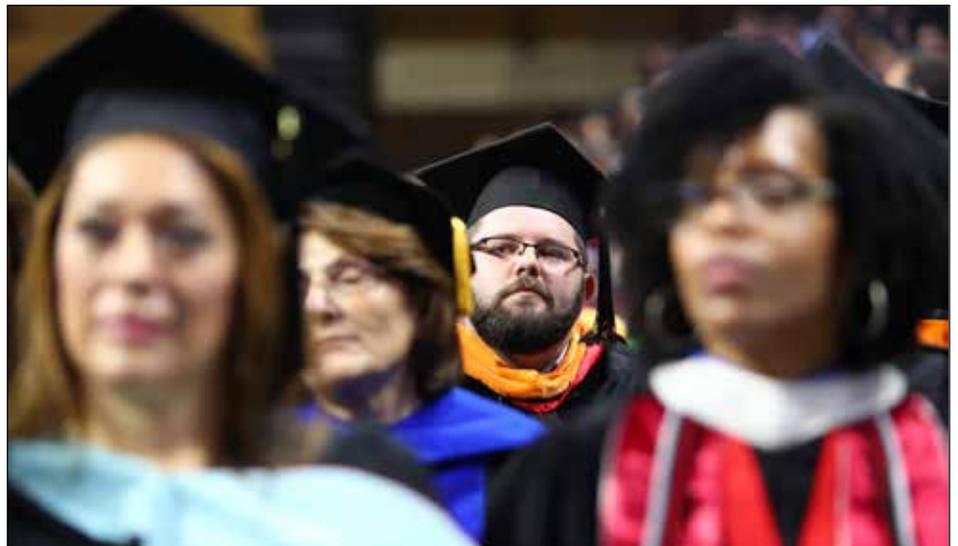
Members of the Student Association of Radiographers, along with advisor Kimberly Krapels, recently represented Middlesex County College at the 2018 Annual New Jersey Society of Radiologic Technologists Conference in Atlantic City. One MCC student, Brian Bernal, placed third in the X-ray Competition out of approximately 120 x-ray students from programs throughout the state.



Joy & Pride



Clockwise from top left: MCC grads recognized their families, turned their tassels to the left signifying the moment of graduation, and beamed with joy. Meanwhile, faculty looked on with pride, and above, Robert Colburn, the last remaining member of the College's 1966 original faculty, led the academic processional as grand marshal. He is retiring this year.



# Paul Singh Named MCC Alumnus of the Year

Lakhwinderpal “Paul” Singh, a 2011 graduate of Middlesex County College, was named the 2018 Alumnus of the Year for Contributions to the College, its Alumni Association or its Foundation. The award was presented during Celebration Day, an annual event that honors College employees reaching milestone service anniversaries, two Outstanding Service to the College award winners, as well as the Alumnus of the Year.

Mr. Singh received an Associate Degree in Business. He then worked as an MCC scholarship program coordinator from 2012 to 2016 before joining Rutgers School of Business as a program coordinator, and recruitment and internship coordinator. He is currently working in an educational institution specializing in life and data sciences programs as an admissions manager.

“I often think of my life in two parts: Before Middlesex County College and after,” Mr. Singh said. “Pre-MCC saw me working hard but with not much to show for it. I was at my wit’s end when I arrived at the doorstep of MCC in 2008. I was welcomed with open arms.”

That was the start of his educational journey, which includes earning a



From left: Veronica Clinton, executive director of the Middlesex County College Foundation, who presented the award; Lakhwinderpal “Paul” Singh; and College President Joann La Perla-Morales.

Bachelor’s Degree in Business from Thomas Edison State University, and, in January 2019, a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies.

“MCC transformed my life,” he said. “Here I am today, with so much more than I could ever imagine. MCC was the catalyst to my success on many

levels and I am forever grateful.”

Two MCC employees received outstanding service to the College awards during Celebration Day. Amalia Claffey received the award for staff members and Daniel Fuchs for administrators.



MCC honored outstanding graduating students in each academic program, as well as the Chambers Award winners – graduates with a perfect 4.0 GPA – during the Honors Convocation. Seated, from left: Marvi Niaz Abbasi, Samantha Marie Casano, Kaelyn Patel, Eunice S. Camerino, and Justine Burnett. Standing: College President Joann La Perla-Morales, Professor Melissa Luis, who gave the keynote address at the ceremony, Jeffrey Herron, dean of Professional Studies, Jamie N. Donato, Harpreet Kaur, Sindhu Murthy, Vinnicius B. Coelho, Jeanna T. Alemany, Linda Scherr, dean of Arts and Sciences, and Mark McCormick, vice president for academic and student affairs. Chambers winners not pictured: , Heather R. Kelleman, Rocio A. Mantilla and Anthony A. Pensak.