



**November 8, 2011**

### **Phi Theta Kappa to Host 'Pledge to Completion' Signing at MSCC**

Statistics show the surest way to land a job in particular field is to finish college and earn a degree or certificate. And that's exactly what students at Mid-South Community College are promising to do as part of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society's observance of Founders Day.

On Monday, Nov. 14, MSCC students will be encouraged to sign a pledge to complete their degrees and certifications before transferring to four-year institutions or entering the job market. Hosted by MSCC's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the event will begin at 10 a.m. and continue until 2 p.m. in the rotunda of Donald W. Reynolds Center for Educational Excellence.

The effort is part of a national community college movement to increase success and graduation rates at institutions from coast to coast and beyond. Local Phi Theta Kappa chapter members are serving as the student arm of The Community College Completion Corps, a national education initiative.

In April 2010, leaders of six organizations representing the nation's 1,200 community colleges signed the "Call to Action," a pledge to increase student completion rates by 50 percent over the next decade. Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society was the only student organization asked to participate.

In October 2010, Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden and a community college professor, hosted the first White House Summit on Community Colleges. President Obama, philanthropist Melinda Gates and a host of speakers praised community colleges for serving almost half of the nation's students and playing a pivotal role in educating the workforce.

The President has called for community colleges to produce an additional 5 million degrees and certificates in the next 10 years, part of his goal to restore the United States as the world's leader in college graduates.

In addition to the "sign the pledge" effort, the local PTK chapter will announce the results of the "Pie 4 Phi" fund-raising effort at the observance. Five MSCC employees have "volunteered their faces" for the cause, and students and staff are in the process of voting with their spare change and loose bills to determine which person will be the "lucky" recipient of a pie in the face.

Participants include Logan Oliver, Erin Gordon, Pete Selden, Kelly Bearden, and Pam Capps. Voting bins are located in MSCC's Learning Success Center on the South Campus and the Workforce Technology Center on the North Campus.

Phi Theta Kappa observes its birthday on Nov. 19. Presidents of two-year colleges in Missouri established the organization in 1918 to recognize scholastic achievement by their students and to establish a common purpose and standard for honors organizations on their different campuses.

The founders modeled it after the prestigious senior honor society, Phi Beta Kappa, and they selected the name from the initial letters of the three Greek words meaning "wisdom," "aspiration," and "purity." In 1929, the American Association of Junior Colleges officially recognized Phi Theta Kappa on Nov. 19.

Chartered in the spring of 1997, MSCC's chapter includes service-oriented students with a grade-point average of 3.5 or higher in at least 12 hours of course work leading to an associate degree.

MSCC's Phi Theta Kappa members participate in a variety of projects to benefit the campus and the community, including book recycling and the collection of clothing and food items for those in need.

In addition, in support of the Operation Green initiative encouraging environmental awareness, the local chapter collects recyclable plastic shopping bags in partnership with Wal-Mart to benefit the environment.

MSCC English Instructor Michelle McMillen and Registrar's Assistant Laura Mason serve as co-advisors on the West Memphis campus.

Phi Theta Kappa is the only internationally-acclaimed honor society serving institutions with associate degree programs. The organization is the largest honor society in American higher education with 1,250 chapters and more than 1.3 million members.

For information on Phi Theta Kappa, other student organizations, or academic/technical programs at the college, visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway in West Memphis, call (870) 733-6728, email [admissions@midssouthcc.edu](mailto:admissions@midssouthcc.edu), or access the website at [www.midssouthcc.edu](http://www.midssouthcc.edu).