



**August 26, 2013**

### **MSCC Names Melinda Laster 2013-14 Academic All-Star**

Mid-South Community College student Melinda Laster of Proctor has earned Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC) Academic All-Star recognition for 2013-2014.

The West Memphis High School graduate will receive formal acknowledgment of her accomplishment at the AATYC Fall Conference In October. With the honor comes a \$500 scholarship for the spring semester.

“I was excited and shocked when I heard about it,” Laster said. “I was in an office on the North Campus and wanted to scream, but I couldn’t because someone was making a call.”

“When I first saw the All-Star display in the Reynolds Center, I thought, ‘I want my picture up there some day.’ I was just being me, and it happened. I’m ecstatic.”



Born and raised in Crittenden County, Laster received numerous nominations for the prestigious honor.

“Ms. Laster was a great student in Oral Communication, and she really enjoyed working with her peers in groups,” said Dr. Jeannie Oliver, MSCC’s Coordinator of Academic Advising. “She used her communication skills to make sure that all students

were on track with their group assignments. The students really learned from her as a leader.”

Holly Carlo, MSCC administrative specialist for Student Life, said Laster goes the extra mile to help other students.

“She wants to see others succeed, and if she can help, she will,” Carlo said. “Mrs. Laster spent countless hours helping a student in our Learning Success Center and would stay long after her classes were over to help this student. She is a model student and an excellent role model.”

According to another person who recommended her for the honor, “Melinda Laster represents what is best at Mid-South. She is committed to her education and realizes the enormous opportunities provided to her by this institution.”

Laster enrolled at MSCC in 2006, but juggling full-time employment, school, and family didn’t work for her. When her two children graduated from West Memphis High School, she decided to try again.

“I was tired of working job after job and getting nowhere fast,” she explained. “I went to Mid-South Community College to speak to someone – anyone – who could put me on the right track.”

“Everyone I met was so kind and very informative. All of my instructors were patient and eager to assist me with whatever I needed. I absolutely love this college. MSCC makes it where you have no reason not to succeed.”

She praised the College’s Financial Aid staff members for their assistance.

“Christopher Davis personally walked me through the application process step by step, never once showing signs of impatience, and kept me informed,” she said. “I am truly grateful to him.”

“Carol McHann is awesome, too. And I love Amy Cable; she’s absolutely wonderful. Everyone I’ve met has been so nice and helpful. That made a difference and made we want to be a part of everything MSCC.”

Her family provided plenty of help as well.

“In the beginning, I was thinking, ‘Am I out of my league? I’ve been out of school for 20-something years. Can I really do this?’ My son was like, ‘You can do it, Mom.’ My husband and daughter also encouraged me.”

“I had a lot of support, especially from my husband. He was my study partner at home. I thank God for him.”

Laster is working toward a degree in Respiratory Care.

“I’ve always loved the medical field,” she said. “My ambition is to assist patients who have difficulty breathing and other respiratory illnesses. I feel it was just my destiny to do something in the medical field. Everywhere I go, people ask ‘Are you a nurse?’ because I’m always helping somebody. That’s rewarding to me.”

When she’s not in the classroom or working as a tutor or a Structured Learning Assistance lab leader, Laster finds other opportunities to participate in college activities.

“I became a member of Career Pathways, TRiO SSS (Student Support Services), the MSCC Ambassadors, and the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society,” she said. “I love being involved, and I’m always looking for opportunities to help others succeed.”

While she is now an official MSCC Ambassador, she has been a “cheerleader” since the beginning.

“I tell everyone about MSCC. I’ve been recruiting my husband, and I just got him in class on Tuesday (Aug. 20). And my daughter is here.”

“I am so grateful to God first, then to all of the staff at MSCC for making my stay here a memorable one. I am spokesperson for MSCC, and I try to recruit as many people as I can to attend such a prestigious college. I am very proud to be a student at Mid-South Community College.”

Laster joins a distinguished group of MSCC students who have been honored by the institution and the two-year college association. Previous MSCC Academic All-Star winners include Kenneth Cunningham, Pat Crume, Danielle Abner, Chris Sherrill, Erna Bass, Jasmine Grayson, Lori Hall, Corey Platt, Nonda Mitchell, Faye Flowers, Allison Covington, Bonnie Nichols, Roneshia Hill, Susan Madison, and Brandy McAdams.

For information on the All-Star program or other scholarship/financial assistance opportunities at Mid-South Community College, please call (870) 733-6729. For general information about the college, please call (870) 733-6728, see the website at [www.midsouthcc.edu](http://www.midsouthcc.edu), email [admissions@midsouthcc.edu](mailto:admissions@midsouthcc.edu), or visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway in West Memphis.