

LTI insider

AUTUMN 2009



Chris Decker

CEO and Founder of LBI and LTI, 1941–2008

When my father won his Entrepreneur of the Year award in 1996 at the Hilton in Pittsburgh, his acceptance speech lasted about ten seconds. He walked to the podium and said the rules of a good speech were “to be brief, be memorable, be gracious, and be seated. Thank you.” Then he sat down.

I’ll try to be as brief on these pages as he was at that podium, though I’m not sure I’ll be able to. That’s mostly because I find it difficult to encapsulate his personality and the accomplishments of several years of hard work into a few short paragraphs.

I was thinking about this a few months ago while I watched the movie *The Bucket List*. In it, Jack Nicholson’s and Morgan Freeman’s characters are both diagnosed with cancer. So, they decide to leave the hospital and do things they never got to do—racing hot rods, skydiving, and traveling to far-off destinations.

As I watched that movie, I realized my father hadn’t needed a bucket list. In fact, he lived his bucket list. Nothing drove him more than those projects and ideas we’ve heard and read so much about during the last year, and, really, during the last several decades.

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The new sign at the entrance to LTI

LTI-Sharon

Our big project is finally finished

LTI-Sharon had been located on Boyd Drive since the late 1970s in the former Hadley grade school, and finally, we’re settled into our new building on Sterling Avenue in downtown Sharon. The project, originally conceived and initiated by LTI’s late CEO Christopher Decker, was a big job—roughly 17,000 square feet of building space demolished, redesigned, and rebuilt. So when we say “new,” we mean new. Want to see more? Just visit the school’s web site at www.laurel.edu and look under new homes for LTI. ■



Kiesha Gibson and Diane Heathcote at the ribbon cutting for LTI-Sharon



A look down a new hallway

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Christopher Decker . . .

He approached all of these things — whether developing the schools, planting his gardens at home, researching his family history, or finding and collecting antiques or artwork — with purpose and drive. And he brought every facet of his personality to bear on them. He was as strong as he was smart, as compassionate as he was assertive, and as proud as he was quiet about the many, many things he accomplished.

I even asked him shortly before he died why he didn't brag about some of the things he'd done. His only response was that it would be immodest to do so, and that's what I expected him to say.

Next to family, the most important things to my father were the schools. First LBI, started by him and his wife Nancy in 1985, and then LTI in Sharon and Meadville, PA, which they purchased in 2007.

The long-running story (and occasional joke) was that he decided to open the school because he had trouble finding a good secretary with the proper skills when he was a vice president at Gallatin Bank.

But it was more than that. While the schools showed his interest in training competent professionals, they also reflected his deep belief in people — in the ability to be strong in the face of difficulty, in the strength it takes to start a new path in life, and in the importance of second chances, even when circumstances might dictate otherwise. The theme was always consistent: Seemingly ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Even now — whether it's another trophy won by PBL students at a national competition, or the admiration he had for the work of his long-time contractor Charlie Haines who built significant

portions of the school in Uniontown — it's not hard to sense the pride he'd have at seeing a job well done.

It's certainly an understatement to say that a man of his character and influence will be sorely missed by family, friends, students, and colleagues for a very long time. But it's also true that a man of his character and influence will stay with us for a very long time to come. And that, perhaps, is his most important accomplishment — a life well lived.

May we all be as blessed. With family and friends. With respect and admiration. With vision and drive. With compassion and dignity. With strength and will. And most of all, with love.

— Jonathan Decker



LTI-Meadville ribbon cutting

LTI-Meadville

What a difference a new space can make

LTI-Meadville, originally conceived as a satellite school of the Sharon location, has grown at an exceptional pace during the last year. While our old space in the Talon Business Center gave us a place to teach students, it was quickly getting too small and too dated for the kind of work we wanted to do and the kind of programs we wanted to offer. So, we talked to Steve

and Scott, the guys who run the Talon Business Center, and arranged to move into a new part of the building. And it happened fast. So fast, in fact, that we really don't have any pictures of our old space. Want to see more? Just visit the school's web site at www.laurel.edu and look under new homes for LTI. ■



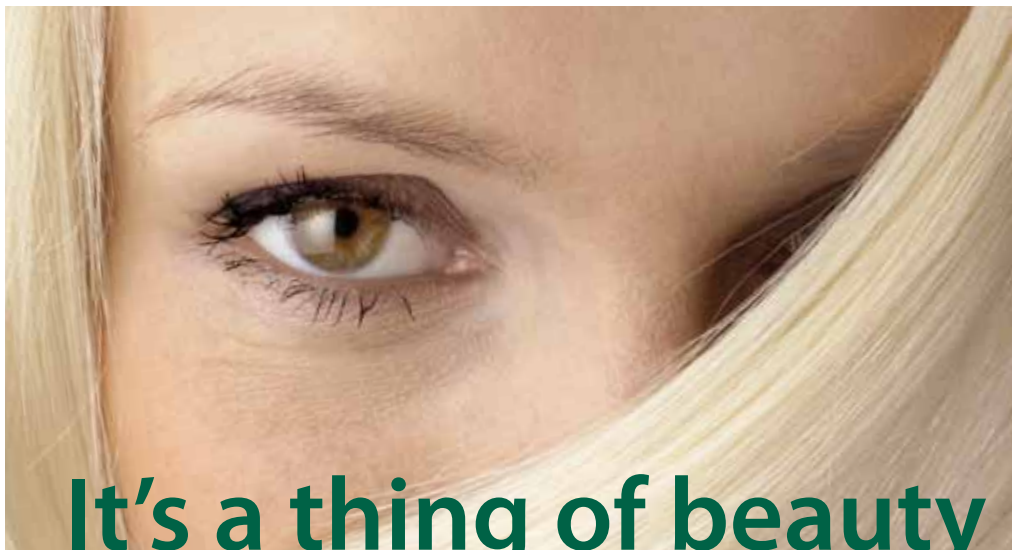
Financial Aid Administrator Pat Campbell



Theresa Anthony, Charles Anderson, Nancy Decker



Senior Tea in a new classroom



It's a thing of beauty

LTI now offers Cosmetology

LTI is slated to start its new Cosmetology program on September 28, 2009. Nancy Decker, LTI's president, explains the motivation to add the program. "We saw a clear need for cosmetology because other programs closed in recent years. The time was right for us."

Students will learn hair cutting and styling along with treatments such as manicures, pedicures, and facials. They will also study theory and develop hands-

on experience with clients. The program emphasizes business management as well as personal and career development. Graduates will be able to take the Pennsylvania State Board of Cosmetology licensing exams.

The custom salons and classrooms are located at the school's new building in Sharon, PA, and in the school's renovated location in Meadville, PA. Each clinic features new washbasins, styling stations,

and manicure tables—all of which allow students to learn and work in professional settings. The clinics will eventually be open to the public.

Cosmetology also marks growth for the school from business-related programs such as Accounting, Business Administration, and Information Technology to programs oriented to health and beauty industries. Decker notes, "It's been a busy and productive year. We've also added respiratory therapy in Sharon and pharmacy technician in Meadville."

Instructors for LTI-Sharon are Renee Cunningham, owner of Sunny Cuts in West Middlesex, and Debbie Wojtalik, former owner of Deb's Cut-Away and a stylist at Cheri's Cutting Edge. Instructors at LTI-Meadville are Miranda Creacraft, a stylist and nail & skin technician at The Hair Stop in Saegertown, and Cyndi Allen, owner of The Hair Haven Salon in Meadville.

LTI is accepting applications for limited openings for the September 28 class start. The Sharon location can be reached at 724-983-0700, and the Meadville location can be reached at 814-724-0700.

Interested parties can also send an email to lti.admission@laurel.edu or visit the school's web site at www.laurel.edu. ■

LTI announces new Respiratory Therapy program

Graduates' careers get a breath of fresh air

LTI will start a new Respiratory Therapy program in late September 2009. Nancy Decker, president of the career school, recently announced earning final approval for the program.

"We started respiratory therapy because we identified a need for respiratory therapists in northwestern Pennsylvania, and our advisory committee of respiratory and medical professionals from the region strongly supported that decision," said Decker.

While Respiratory Therapy is new to LTI-Sharon, it has been running since fall 2006 with great success at the school's Uniontown, PA location. Ninety-three percent of the 2008 graduates were placed

within three months of graduation, and they were hired at salaries considered very competitive for the area.

Many of those graduates were displaced workers who took advantage of the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA). This program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports.

Mark Kolacinski, a dislocated worker who used the TAA program, recently accepted a position at Jefferson Regional Medical Center. He said, "When I started school, I was unsure of the outcome at my age. But with the help of the school's faculty and staff, they made what I thought was impossible a reality."

The first Respiratory Therapy class will start September 28 and will graduate January 2011. The June class is nearly filled, and the school is already getting inquiries for the next class, scheduled to begin in 2010.

Students begin the 18-month program by developing basic medical skills. Next, they learn to use EKG machines and

oxygen analyzers, and they study advanced medical topics like cardiopulmonary anatomy and physiology, pulmonary functions, and critical care. They build on that training through the remainder of the program. Most importantly, they sharpen these skills by working in clinical situations throughout their course work.

The National Board of Respiratory Care administers the respiratory therapy registry exam. When students pass, they earn the Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) credential, a requirement to practice respiratory therapy in the United States.

Before final approval, the program had to pass muster with the State Board of Private Licensed Schools, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care, and the school's national accrediting agency, the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools.

For more information on this and other specialized associate degree programs at LTI, contact the school at 724-983-0700 or send an email to lti.admission@laurel.edu. ■

Congratulations to LTI's 2008 Instructors of the Year

Crystal Epps



Teaching Specialties

- English, communications, career development, and general education classes

Education

- Associate Degree in Business Administration, Business Institute of Pennsylvania
- Bachelor's degree in Speech Communication, Edinboro University
- Master's degree in Communication, Edinboro University
- Currently working on a doctorate in Educational Leadership, Capella University.

Sandy Young



Teaching Specialties

- Economics, math, computers, sales & marketing, accounting, and job search

Education

- Bachelor's degree in Education (majors in Biological Science and Social Studies), Slippery Rock University
- Additional courses in computers, physics, oceanography, chemistry, history, and political science from institutions including Slippery Rock, Clarion University, University of Maryland, and Westminster College

In their own words

LTI graduates tell readers about their professional lives

Laura Graves

I graduated from the Shenango Valley School of Business in 1983 with a degree in word processing/executive secretary. My career began at Penn State Shenango, where I first became faculty secretary and typed documents and manuscripts for more than 70 faculty members. I was then promoted to secretary in the University Relations department, where I was responsible for public relations correspondence as well as fundraising initiatives. Finally, I earned what I consider the ultimate promotion as executive secretary to the president.

My 10 years at Penn State Shenango has been predicated on the skills and training I learned in school, particularly in the areas of transcription, word processing, and general training in secretarial duties. Throughout my career at Penn State Shenango, I continued my education and eventually earned my bachelor's degree in health care administration. Currently, I'm employed with Sharon Regional Health System as director of physician services.

My training at Shenango Valley School of Business still applies when organizational

skill and managing multiple priorities becomes an important daily function.

My advice to LTI students is to start out with the basics, build a strong foundation, and take it one step at a time. These skills can take you down a path as far as you want to go.

Mary Everitt

I graduated from Business Institute of Pennsylvania's Health Information Technology program in 1998. After graduation I worked for the Mind Body Wellness Center (Meadville, PA) in research and development. In this position, I gathered and entered data from programs designed to improve quality of life for individuals dealing with chronic illnesses. I also assisted with transcription, filing, and release of records. Soon, I realized I had a desire to work in more depth with medical records and legal compliance in health care.

In April 2001 I was hired as a unit secretary at Wesbury United Methodist Community, a continuing care retirement community in Meadville. It was a wonderful opportunity to not only work with medical records but also to assist clinicians with the care of residents by providing clerical support. Learning the regulations, quality standards, and legal issues relating long-term care was challenging and rewarding.

In 2002 I accepted the position of medical record coordinator. My responsibilities include release of information, maintenance of current records, and retention of discharged records. I also audit documentation and supervise unit secretaries. I am currently helping with the change from paper records to electronic records.

In 2003, I was named chief privacy officer to oversee the implementation of changes to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. This work involves training staff to follow the new procedures, and I also help residents and their families understand their rights regarding medical information and protection of that information.

In health care the one thing that remains consistent is change, which occurs almost daily in technology, clinical knowledge, and regulatory oversight. It is a wonderful challenge to learn and apply new skills as this industry evolves. And change doesn't stop there. Right now, I'm planning to advance in my career by working toward a bachelor's degree in health care administration. ■

Editors note: The Shenango Valley School of Business and Business Institute of Pennsylvania are two former names of Laurel Technical Institute, or LTI, as it's now known.

LTI's January 2009 Graduates



(Left to right) First row: Anita Cameron, Crystal Harper, Billie Jo Davis, Bobbye Sue Lytle, Kim Trammell, Gretchen Sexton, Sharon Cochran, Angie Varner
Second row: Kelly Leonhard, Michelle Chavers
Third row: Stephanie Bernoski, Tammy Loop

LTI's May 2009 Graduates



(Left to right) First Row: Loretta Cain, Brittany DeMarco, Daniell Yoas, Kim Robinson, Noreen Kocis
Second Row: Jennifer Laird, Billie Jo Harakal, Michelle Brown, Lori Ramsey, Lesli Snyder, Shavone Palmer, Hilary Herster, Jessica Boatwright
Third Row: Tonia McEwen, Valerie Jones, Kim Ladner, Dan Daugherty, Jr., Richard Pekrol, James Cromartie, Kristen Hogue, Erica Carpin