

## Saúl Arteaga – The American Dream Comes True for an MCC Alumnus



Saúl Arteaga

At age 17, Saúl Arteaga was working long hours at a hotel in Lima, Peru when the opportunity of a lifetime presented itself.

Two visiting Americans, Lynn and Michael Krause of Woodstock, befriended Arteaga and invited him to come to visit America. For two years he stayed in touch with the couple and worked hard to save money to make the trip.

Arteaga was an avid reader and knew the value of education at a young age. He was motivated by a particular phrase in one of John F. Kennedy’s speeches... “Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country.” This inspirational message made him realize that America was the land of opportunity and that education was a pathway to make a good living even better.

Although he had very basic English skills, Arteaga enrolled at McHenry County College. In Peru, he did not graduate with good grades, and the continuous teacher strikes at home often left him with an unfinished year curriculum. He thought for sure he would have a better experience in the States.

It is here where he first learned about cultural differences and perseverance. He didn’t know what a syllabus was and he didn’t understand the organizational process of the classroom. Perhaps

many of us born in the United States are unaware of the idiosyncrasies that are often expressed in our everyday language. Slang like “you’re out in left field” compelled Arteaga to wonder where this left field was and how did he get there. Fortunately, Arteaga met Linda Gough, an MCC Intro to Writing instructor, who made all the difference.

After getting a zero in his first class – chemistry – his second experience with writing was more positive and productive. In his third class, Speech, he got an A.

Today, Arteaga is earning his master’s degree in translation studies and learning American Sign Language. He became a U.S. Citizen in 1998, and he is an entrepreneur.

Arteaga’s company, Southern Wisconsin Interpreting & Translation Services (SWIT) Ltd., provides interpreting and translation along with other language services and training for hospitals and other healthcare providers, law enforcement, schools and colleges, and the courts throughout the United States. Translation languages include, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Bulgarian, American Sign Language, and others.

SWIT Ltd. is the only translation company that has certified Spanish interpreters, which brings credibility to federal and state legal situations.

Currently, he is working with the Wisconsin Supreme Court Committee to improve communication systems in that state. His company is based out of Southern Wisconsin with offices in Rockford, and he hopes to open a branch in Crystal Lake if he finds an opportunity.

“Because of my experience coming to the states, I think I bring sensitivity about what it is like to be in a foreign environment and then making it a very comfortable one. The way I see it, I am very fortunate and I feel like I have won the lotto. I get to use my native language and learn about the country.” Arteaga is a strong proponent of education.

“Education set me apart and it increased my opportunities, but it didn’t stop when I got that piece of paper. I am a life-long learner, I ask many questions”

Today, Arteaga is still balancing work, school, and his family. The father of four girls recognizes that his biggest investment has to be his family. His greatest supporter is his wife, Rachel Jordan. “Family is what I work for ... to raise and teach them the best that I can,” he said.

Arteaga would like to extend a 25 percent discount of the services his company provides to all of his fellow MCC alumni. To contact Arteaga or learn more about his company, please call (262) 740-2590 or email him at [saular@swits.us](mailto:saular@swits.us).



Miraflores Square, Lima, Peru

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### Alumni Association Council

Margaret (Peg) Olsen,  
Class of 1983  
Council Chair

Linda Percy McMahan,  
Class of 2002  
Friends of MCC  
Foundation Liaison

Frances Mai-Ling  
Class of 2005

Jim Nierman,  
Class of 2002

### Staff Support

Kathrine Pfister,  
Class of 1986  
Development Coordinator,  
MCC

## MCC Alumni - People you can recognize

Many MCC Alumni pass through our doors and go on to build incredible professional and personal lives. From Supreme Court judges to celebrated artists, MCC alumni are changing lives and history. If you are or know of an MCC alumnus who is deserving of recognition, MCC has several recognition programs. Currently we are looking for nominees for the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) alumni recognition awards. Brief details about the two awards are listed below. You'll find more detailed description along with application requirements on the MCC Alumni web page by going to [www.mchenry.edu/alumni](http://www.mchenry.edu/alumni).

## Distinguished Alumni Award

The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes the many success stories of Illinois' community college graduates. Nominees must have completed a recognized program of instruction at an Illinois public community college prior to June 30, 2004.

## Pacesetter Award

The Pacesetter Award recognizes the accomplishments of Illinois' more recent community college graduates. Nominees must have completed a recognized program of instruction at an Illinois public community college after June 30, 2004.

Nomination applications must be submitted to the MCC Alumni office no later than Jan. 15, 2009 for consideration. The MCC Board of Trustees makes the formal nomination to ICCTA on behalf of the College.

## Featured Alumni Artist

**Terttu Uibopuu** is a Chicago-based photographer who has earned a BFA in Photography from Columbia College, Chicago.

Born in Estonia, she moved to the United States in 2002. The following year, she enrolled at McHenry County College in Crystal Lake, Illinois. Because of her early interest in the field, she took every photography class offered at MCC and worked as a darkroom lab aide.

In 2006, Uibopuu received the Photography Department's Kodak Scholarship and was awarded her first solo show, *The Space Between* (2007). She has exhibited her photographs in Nord Art 2007, an international art show in Germany.

With collaborator Sarah McKemie, Uibopuu began a dual self-portrait project in 2006. Together they became Honorees of the Illinois National Museum of Women in the Arts (2006), recipients of the Albert P. Weisman Scholarship at Columbia College (2007), and have exhibited work in various galleries, including the Orleans Street Gallery and the Schneider Gallery. In 2007 Uibopuu was selected as a Curator's Choice and an Artist to Watch during the Chicago Art Open show.



*"Blowdry"* by Terttu

## Upcoming Alumni Art Series Exhibitor

**Lucas Shaffer**  
**Photography**  
**Epping Gallery**

February 2 – March 28, 2009



*"Starsmoon"* by Lucas Shaffer

I owe my love and life with photography to Art Hand and the MCC Photography department. It was here I first stepped into the darkroom and found the magic and mystery this media presents. MCC's art department was a thriving community of instructors and students that gave me the comfort and permission to make extremely personal work and experience art as a process for feeling and understanding. So fervent was the community that many of my classmates and instructors are still my dearest and closest friends, and for that I owe MCC a great debt.

I lived on the coast of Maine for three years while attending what is now known as the Maine Media Workshops. It was Art Hand and his personal experience that pointed me to The Maine Media Workshops and its photographic conservatory. In Maine, photography became alive as a viable medium to express, uncover, and confess every piece of me as a person. My time in Maine also produced some of the richest experiences, work, and friendships I have ever known. I have exhibited in group and solo shows in Maine, New York, Boston, Chicago, and I am honored to display my images at MCC.

## Class Notes

This section is designed for alumni, students and faculty to share their information with the college community. If you are interested in seeking out former classmates or faculty, let us know. We'll put your request in the class notes you submit to us. Once we are contacted by those you are seeking to reconnect with, we will try to put you in touch with each other. If you would like to submit a Class Note for inclusion in the next MCC Connections Alumni Issue, please visit our website at [www.mchenry.edu/alumni](http://www.mchenry.edu/alumni) to download the form.

After graduating from MCC, I finished up at NIU, graduating with a bachelor of science degree in sociology in 1988. I have been employed at American Airlines for 20 years. I have two sons, Eric and Andrew. I hope they will aspire to attend MCC. My husband was a graduate of NIU and also started his academic career at a community college – ECC.

– Debra Hardeland Bonasera,  
Class of 1985

I attended MCC for only one year as a way to keep college costs down. After transferring to the University of Wisconsin, Madison, I realized the quality of my MCC coursework. In particular, John Konitzer in the chemistry department created a strong foundation for courses at a Big Ten school. Upon my acceptance into the pharmacy program at the University of Illinois, Chicago, I transferred to that university and eventually earned a doctorate from that institution. I practiced in Illinois for eight years before moving to my present home and practice in Arizona. I am grateful to MCC for the role it played in my academic success!

– Mike Steffens, Class of 1986

After 20 years in public relations with Fortune 100 Companies and Healthcare, I started my own business. “Chickbait” manufactures beautiful jewelry from real fishing gear. Packaging is done by handicapped people at a facility in Phoenix and we sell online and in 30+ stores all over the United States. My daughter is also a graduate of MCC and is now a special education teacher, and my parents still attend classes at MCC!

– Amy Biedermann (Hanson) Halm,  
Class of 1979

In 1992, I transferred to Judson College where I earned a BA in Human Relations. In 2001, I earned my MA in Counseling Psychology. I am a therapist and I supervise three branches of an outpatient mental health clinic in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

– Leslie Harris Spencer, Class of 1992

## MCC Volleyball Qualifies for 4th Consecutive NJCAA National Tournament

The McHenry County College women's volleyball team (36-16) played the NJCAA Region IV, District B semi-finals against conference foe Moraine Valley on Friday, November 7th, defeating them 25-20, 25-10, 25-15. The Scots then went on to play District B rival Kankakee in the championship game, Saturday, November 8th, and, in probably their finest performance of the year, turned back the Cavaliers in three straight games, 25-19, 25-15, and 25-17.

The Region IV District B triumph qualified the Lady Scots for a fourth consecutive trip (five in the last six years) to the NJCAA D II Nationals in Wisconsin Dells, Wis. The MCC Lady Scots have played the most competitive and demanding schedule in school

history with 21 of the 52 matches (40%) against NJCAA nationally ranked opponents, including four matches against the number one ranked teams in Division I and II and three matches against the #2 ranked team in D III.

Outside Hitter Shaela Hayden (Harvard, IL), Libero/Outside Hitter Amy Reynolds (Schaumburg, IL) and Setter Cat Martin (Harvard, IL) were named to the 2008 NJCAA Division II, Region IV, District B All-Region First Team. Hayden and Martin were also District B All-Tournament selections. MCC head coach Chas Kennedy was recognized as 2008 NJCAA Region IV, District B Coach of the Year and Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference Coach of the Year.

