

AIR CONDITIONING CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA APPRENTICESHIP GRADUATION  
CELEBRATION  
DAVE AND BUSTERS, WHITE FLINT MALL  
APRIL 28, 2011

# Celebrating Apprentices of Today

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A Speech by  
Montgomery College President  
Dr. DeRionne Pollard

Dr. Pollard celebrates the graduation of 29 students from the 2011 Apprenticeship Training Program partnership between the College and the National Capital Chapter of the Air Conditioning Contractors of America.

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Hello National Capital Chapter of the Air Conditioning

Contractors of America (*make sure you use the FULL title, including chapter!*)

And a special hello to the ACCA (ak-ah) apprentices—or should I now say former apprentices— on your graduation. I know the last four years have meant long commutes and long days of training on the job beginning at 7 a.m., followed by classes until after 8 p.m. This is a momentous day for you and our families who sacrificed so much over the years and I am honored to be a part of your celebration.

I know the last thing you probably want to do today is have a quiz after such a grueling program! But, being that I will always consider myself an English professor, let me give you a little history quiz. What do Paul Revere, John Deere and Henry Ford have in common? Anyone?

All these famous men now have something in common with you: they all served as apprentices at one time in their careers.

Before he became known as a patriot of the American Revolution, Paul Revere served as a silversmith apprentice and eventually became the successful successor of his father's silvery business.

Before he became the renowned plow entrepreneur, John Deer was one of six siblings raised by a single mother after their father was lost at sea. So, he did what he had to in order to help his family: he became an apprentice to a blacksmith where to developed the foundation of the skills that would make him world renowned.

Before he invented the famous Model T that would revolutionize the auto industry, Henry Ford was a farmer's son, always imagined technology transforming the way his father worked the farm. It inspired him to go to Detroit, where he became an apprentice and learned about machinery that paved the way for his indelible mark on history.

Of course I fast-forwarded through the years of hard work, determination, dedication, and education all these individuals endured to become the successes we know them to be. But my point is: apprenticeships have for centuries been the stepping stone to a successful future. This is the exact type of program that has been a source of economic power throughout history, and which I believe will propel our economy into the future.

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I am sure you have all heard me talk about relevance – and making Montgomery College is the most relevant community college in the country. Well when I talk about relevance, **this** is what I mean! Partnering with local organizations and businesses to help train their workforce of tomorrow. It is a strategic, win-win partnership and I thank ACCA (ah-ka) for joining forces with our College more than 20 years ago to achieve a united vision.

The 29 graduates in this year's class represent why programs like this are so crucial. Some of you are just beginning your life in the working world and this marks your first step.

Others of you have reinvented yourself and started a new career future. All of you have made sacrifices to thrive – impressing not only your 19 respective employers but also

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your professors at Montgomery College. It speaks volumes about you that in this economy, companies are willing to invest in you and in your future by sponsoring your participation in this program. You all deserve a major pat on the back. All of you are stars.

But, let me wrap up by mentioning specifically one of the all-stars among you. This year's BOT scholar is graduating with a 4.0 grade point average. It is hard to imagine him never receiving a single grade below an A in the past four years while at the same time working for Mallick Plumbing and Heating. I understand this all-star— Steve Duggan— and his employer are both here today (*confirm with Ed Roberts prior to speech*).

Congrats to Steve – and to all of you. You all deserve a round of applause.

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Of course, I cannot say goodbye to you without plugging continuing education at our College. I hope you consider returning to earn an AAS degree or certificate in Building Trades Technology. Education, especially at Montgomery College, is a lifelong pursuit. Let me leave you where we started— thinking about a pioneer who started as an apprentice. Henry Ford once said: *“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.”* So here’s to a lifelong success in your new careers – and at Montgomery College!

Congrats!