

Fritz Larsen, chair of the BHC Board of Trustees, ran for election because of the opportunity to give back to his alma mater and the community. While studying at Black Hawk College, he played basketball, scoring than 1,000 career points, and met his wife and best friend in a business law class. Larsen says he is so grateful for all Black Hawk College has given him, and that giving back is a privilege.

### **What do you enjoy about being on the board?**

During my tenure on the board, we have shared a common focus and worked collaboratively to that end. It's also an opportunity to effectively work with other talented board members, all with differing vocations, experiences and perspective. We are united on ensuring that Black Hawk College serves as a springboard to student success.



### **As the new board chair, what is your vision for Black Hawk College?**

I have multifaceted expectations but a vision of growing Black Hawk College to meet the needs of our students, to be a fulfilling place of employment for our faculty and enrich opportunities for our community. I recognize that any vision must be shared by all of the BHC trustees, the administration, faculty and staff. In the short-term, grow enrollment and stop the declining enrollment trend.

Black Hawk College needs to ensure that we are addressing the needs of our current students and develop the programs to meet the future needs of students and our community. This includes having the proper pathways for transfer students and the proper certificate programs that enable rapid job placement. Lastly, we need to grow all programs to maximize the use of online technology and to enhance our vocational offerings.

**When you are not serving on the board, what are you up to?**

I'm employed as a program manager for the U.S. Department of the Army. I also enjoy serving in other organizations in a volunteer capacity. Typically, my volunteering aligns with my passions and actualizes into a rewarding experience.

**What is your favorite thing about Black Hawk College?**

Knowing that Black Hawk College serves as the best value in addressing the educational gap within our nine-county communities. Black Hawk College enables our students to earn a quality education at an affordable price.

**Where did you grow up?**

I'm a Quad-Cities native and have lived here most of my life. As a child we lived on the north side of Chicago while my dad was in the Army. After the farm implement industry crashed in the 1980s, I spent about eight months in northern Virginia pursuing employment, but I proudly call the Quad-Cities home.

**When you were a kid, what career did you envision for yourself?**

At the age of four (possibly five), I wanted to work in a department store operating the elevator. Back in those days, elevators were manually operated. I thought what a great way to make money, help customers and have fun. Technology ruined my extremely young life's ambition, and thankfully my experiences and education opened other doors of opportunity.

**If you could go anywhere on vacation for free, where would you want to go and why?**

I'm old enough to know that there are no free lunches and certainly no free vacations. My most desired travel bucket list item is to visit all seven continents before my 70th birthday. I've visited all but a couple of the 50 states on several occasions and have realized three continents to date. I've been doing some preliminary plans and want to complete this challenge while I remain in good health and have the resources to complete it.

**What is something most people do not know about you?**

I've been a boy's high school and men's college basketball referee for over 45 years. I've also been officiating high school boy's football for roughly the past 10 years.

**If you could change something about the world, what would you change?**

This is a complex, opportunity-rich question. There are simply too many opportunities for positive change: world peace, address the starving, cure diseases, ensure that everyone has access to education, gender equality, address the growing environmental concerns and many a chance to change the world that I haven't listed.

**What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?**

Don't allow the naysayers and cynics to stop you from reaching professional and personal goals.

**Aside from the necessities, what is one thing you can't go a day without?**

Love! Without it, our lives would be so void.

**What is your favorite time of the year, and why?**

Christmas - first and foremost we celebrate the birth of Christ. It's also a time of goodwill, fellowship and family. We collectively work our schedules to maximize our family time. The spirit of the season and enjoying everyone's company is so powerful.

**How has education impacted your life?**

Education has clearly opened doors of opportunity that otherwise wouldn't have been opened. Education also has given me a broader, deeper understanding of a breadth of knowledge that is available for those willing to seek personal investment. Clearly, education is the equalizer that enables us to seek self-improvement.

**Did you have a favorite subject when you were a student?**

Economics. During my years at Black Hawk College, I took several econ classes because I enjoyed both the instruction and being challenged by the professors.

**What do you want prospective students to know about Black Hawk College?**

Black Hawk College is a high-quality, cost-effective education resource for all students. Students need to perform critical analysis before choosing their career and educational path. Completing one year, if not the first two years, at Black Hawk College could save a prospective student tens of thousands of dollars depending on their selected field of study

and if the institution were a for-profit, private or state-sponsored college. Understanding career options, the potential job market, the range of earning to be realized from a college degree and then factor that against the cost of living after graduation (including student loan payments) should be quite revealing. After factoring the quality of education and educational costs, Black Hawk College stands alone as the best value for most students. I'd strongly recommend Black Hawk College to all students seeking quality education.

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