



The Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) recently honored a Black Hawk College alumnus, a former trustee and a current trustee.

Distinguished Alumnus Award - Marion Calmer of Alpha is the co-recipient of the 2020 Distinguished Alumnus Award. He is a 1978 Black Hawk College East Campus graduate, founder/owner/CEO of Calmer Corn Heads and president of Calmer's Ag Research Center, the largest independently funded, farmer-run ag research center in the United States.

Calmer invented the world's first 12-inch and 15-inch corn heads. These ultra-narrow rows substantially decrease in-row plant competition compared to traditional row widths. The technology maximizes corn yields, erosion control, natural weed control, production of organic matter and farmer profitability.

Calmer has more than a dozen patents for harvesting technologies that have revolutionized how corn is grown and managed around the world. He has been named one of agriculture's 25 most influential people, voted one of the 40 No-Till legends nationwide and received the Public Image of Agriculture Award.

"In the early days, it was tough, and today, I'm living a fairy tale. I am so honored," Calmer said.

"I love what I can do for our local community. I love what I can do for our local college," he said. "I love what I can do for the American farmer."

Read more about Calmer and his accomplishments at www.bhc.edu/marioncalmer.

The criteria for the ICCTA Distinguished Alumnus Award are:

- Outstanding success and distinction in chosen field
- Humanitarian service that has proven greatly beneficial to society
- Continued interest in and support of education and community colleges
- Overcoming life's obstacles
- Completion of a recognized program of instruction at an Illinois public community college

Past Black Hawk College winners of the Distinguished Alumnus Award are William Albracht, retired agent with the U.S. Secret Service (2018), and Chad Pregracke, founder and president of Living Land Waters (2007).

Lifetime Membership - Community colleges may honor their outstanding and retiring board members for their service and contributions to the community college movement by awarding them an ICCTA Lifetime Membership. Former trustee Tim Black of Galva was presented with the membership.

Black served on the Black Hawk College Board of Trustees from 2003-09 and 2013-19. He served as chair of ICCTA's West Central Region and as ICCTA secretary, where he initiated the association's rebranding and the development of a new association logo.

Other Black Hawk College lifetime members are former trustees Dorothy Beck, David Emerick, Donna Frye and Evelyn Phillips and current trustee Steve Spivey.

Trustee Education Award - This award recognizes outstanding achievement in the area of professional development. Recipients have participated in 15 or more ICCTA seminars. First-time recipient honors went to Jon Looney of Kewanee, Black Hawk College Board of Trustees vice chair and ICCTA president.

Pictured from left to right - Fritz Larsen (BHC Board of Trustees chair and ICCTA past president), Tim Black, Jon Looney, Marion Calmer and Steve Spivey

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