

Rob Murphy served in the U.S. Air Force for four years then worked in a tire factory for 19 years. At age 42, he decided to do something different – he enrolled at Black Hawk College.



For two years, Murphy commuted more than an hour from Savanna, IL, to attend classes at the Quad-Cities Campus and work as a machinist at the Rock Island Arsenal. He balanced school, apprentice work, volunteer firefighting and family.

“There were many sacrifices made to accomplish it, but ultimately it was one of the best decisions he ever made,” daughter Catie Campbell said.

In December 2009, he earned a Machinist Apprentice Certificate from Black Hawk College.

“He was so proud of his accomplishment and we, his family, were just as proud,” Campbell said.

Murphy died in July 2019 after a long fight with chronic liver disease. To honor his memory, his family has established the Rob Murphy Memorial Scholarship through the Black Hawk College Foundation.

“We thought one of the best ways we could honor our Dad and continue to encourage others in their paths would be to lighten the financial burden of a nontraditional student in the same position our Dad was in,” she said.

“If we can make the sacrifices nontraditional students must make even a little bit less and encourage them to keep going, there’s no better way to honor his memory.”

The scholarship is open to college-credit students who enroll in a Trade and Technical Career Program or non-credit students who enroll in the CNC Production Machine Operator Level I program through the college’s Business Training Center.



Rob Murphy with daughters Catie Campbell (left) and Natalie Newcomb (right)

“I think many of us can relate to working toward a nontraditional path for our and our family’s success,” said Zenaida Landeros, executive director of the BHC Foundation.

“We are grateful to the Murphy family for choosing to honor their father by investing in our students,” she said.

For more information about the Rob Murphy Memorial Scholarship, contact Zenaida Landeros at landerosz@bhc.edu or 309-796-5052.

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