

This Trustee Q&A features Rick Fiems, chair of the Black Hawk College Board of Trustees. He is a retired Black Hawk College professor and public safety chief as well as a BHC graduate. Please take a few minutes to get to know him!

Why did you run for election for Black Hawk College's Board of Trustees? I missed being a part of the positive impact that the college has on the community. I like challenges and I felt I still had a contribution or two that I could make. Sometimes retirement can be a bit boring.

What do you enjoy about being on the board? Being a part of something bigger than me. Making a difference in the lives of others. Working with dedicated and intelligent people is fun, too. The focus of the current board is fantastic.



When you are not serving on the board, what are you up to? I also serve on the Rapids City Board as a councilman. I like to fish quite a lot. I also coach bass fishing at Moline High School. Spoiling grandchildren is fun, too. Quiet time with my wife Nancy is good for my soul. I read everything.

What is your favorite thing about BHC? The people. The faculty, staff and students keep me young. It's also rewarding to be involved with an institution that makes people's lives better. I enjoy being a warrior in the battle against ignorance. People who know me understand that I like the battle more than the winning.

Where did you grow up? Kindergarten through ninth, Moline. High school, Port Byron. I have lived in Rock Island County all my life, except for my military service. My college

degrees are from BHC, St. Ambrose and WIU. I am also a bonafide river rat.

When you were a kid, what career did you envision for yourself? When I was young I wanted to be a game warden. When I got a little older I decided to be a policeman. When I became a policeman, I decided to learn to train police officers. The career developed on its own after that.

If you could go anywhere on vacation for free, where would you go and why? The Keys. Good fishing, good weather and great food.



What is something most people do not know about you? My secret fascination with astrophysics. The universe is a beautiful, scary and wonderful place to explore.

If you could change something about the world, what would you change? Our social structure. I have always believed that a person should go to school for the first 20 years of their life, raise their family for the next 20 years and then start working at age 40 and work

till you die. Our current system is backwards.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received? Never surrender the moral high ground. You can't get it back.

Aside from the necessities, what is the one thing you can't go a day without? A smile from my wife.

What is your favorite time of year and why? There are two, spring and fall. One for renewal, one for fulfillment.

How has education impacted your life? My education has allowed and encouraged me to be fearless in learning. The most powerful thing in the world is a good idea. Our progress as humans relies on them. Education makes you question what you think you know. The more you learn the more you realize there is so much more to learn.

Did you have a favorite subject when you were a student? History first, followed by science as a close second. I have always enjoyed trying to figure out how things happen.

What do you want prospective students to know about Black Hawk College? That there are wonderful things to learn being taught by gifted and enthusiastic teachers in every classroom on campus. *What* you decide to learn is not as important as *that* you decide to learn. BHC can open doors to any place in the world. All you need is the courage to walk through one. Don't be afraid. We are here to show you how. No matter where you are or what you are doing, you can make your life better. We can help.

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