"This is very exciting for our students, and our faculty are so deserving of the recognition," says Vice President of Instruction Michelle Grimes Hillman. "Dr. Fang represents the very best of OCC and his students are very lucky to have his mentorship and dedication."
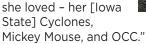
Two of the students, Shread and Weiss, currently are enrolled at OCC and plan to transfer this coming year. "Evangela is transferring in the fall to Berkeley in astrophysics and Trevor will be at UCI starting in the spring, also in astrophysics," says Fang. The third student, Cameron Law, graduated from OCC in 2020 and currently is completing his bachelor's degree at University of California, Irvine in astrophysics.

The Chambliss Astronomy Achievement Student Awards are named for longtime AAS member Carlson R. Chambliss, who taught at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania from 1970 to 2003. Dr. Chambliss not only donated the funds to mint the medals, but also designed them himself.

Team of OCC Research Students Receive Honorable Mention at Astronomy Competition

A group of Orange Coast College current and former students presented their research and received an Honorable Mention at the Chambliss Astronomy Achievement Student Award competition for undergraduate students at the virtual 240th American Astronomical Society (AAS) meeting on June 12-16. Evangela Shread, Trevor Weiss and Cameron Law presented a poster that was among 19 projects that earned recognition, out of 97 undergraduate entries.

"[Evangela, Trevor and Cameron] have been analyzing data about galaxies. Specifically, they are examining the amount of gas inside galaxies which turn into stars, and how it relates to the overall structure of the galaxy, including its mass, size, and shape," says OCC Astronomy Professor Dr. Jerome Fang.

The group of students were led by astronomy professor Dr. Fang, who began a student research group in 2021 after they approached him seeking research opportunities. Their original goal was to present the work at OCC's Giles T. Brown Research Symposium, which they did this past spring. The project won the "Best Poster" award.

Dr. Fang is a founding member of OCC's Research Symposium committee, and plans to serve as chair during the upcoming school year.

In Memoriam: Patti McDonald

Orange Coast College retiree Patti McDonald passed away on Tuesday, July 12**.**

McDonald worked at OCC for 31 years, and retired in 2018 as a senior admissions, record and enrollment tech. She was well known across campus for her sunny and upbeat attitude, and her unfailing school spirit. "When I think of [Patti] I think of OCC, because she loved the College so much," says Scholarship Program Coordinator Tijai Nguyen. "There were three things she loved – her [Iowa State] Cyclones, Mickey Mouse, and OCC."

Nguyen and McDonald were best friends and were often seen around campus together or at school events. Up until recently, they would head to Disneyland every Friday night after work. "She is my best friend, my sister and my family," says Nguyen.

In addition to being an active volunteer on many campus committees, over the years McDonald also helped out with events like Senior Day, Commencement and Honor's Night. When longtime faculty member Leon Skeie lost his young granddaughter Jessie to brain cancer in 2012, McDonald helped spearhead the Jessie Rees Foundation's Joy Jars toy drive on campus.

"She was one of the most wonderful individuals I've ever known," says Skeie. "One year after we started the Jessie Rees Foundation and Joy Jar toy drive, Patti brought in an entire van full of toys she had collected on campus for kids in hospitals. She was just that kind of a person. Everybody loved her, because you couldn't not love her. I'm so thankful that I got to know her in my life."

As a former softball player, McDonald also was a fixture at OCC sports events and supported Pirate athletic teams.

In 2016 McDonald won OCC's "Strong Rower Award" which acknowledges staff members who go above and beyond in their service to students and staff members. At the time, McDonald's colleagues described her as the consummate "team player" who was always willing to go the extra mile for students.

"She was very sweet, that never changed," said Nguyen. "She loved talking to people, they could easily connect with Patti. She was a people person for sure, very honest and caring."

McDonald is survived by her husband, Michael, her three brothers, Tom, Mike and Gary, and countless friends who loved her dearly. Funeral services will take place in Iowa, and the Orange Coast College Foundation has plans to organize an on-campus memorial during the Fall semester.

Navigate OCC Student Orientation Returns In Person on Aug. 23

First-time students will have a chance to get to know Orange Coast College's campus at the Navigate OCC onboarding event on Tuesday, Aug. 23 from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The one-day event, which first began in 2018, will be back in person this semester after taking place in a virtual format for the past two years due to the pandemic. Students who attend in person will have a chance to purchase books, obtain their student IDs, meet with a counselor, locate their classrooms, and more. "Navigate OCC is a great way for new students to feel connected to the campus, develop a community of peers and support, and feel more confident before the start of the semester," says Student Success & Support Program Manager Felipe Salazar.

Navigate OCC is coordinated by the Future Pirate Center, Global Engagement Center, Student Equity, and Associated Students of OCC. Additionally, several departments and programs participate, including OCC's Career Center; EOPS, Financial Aid and Financial Wellness, and Guardian Scholars programs; the STEM Academy; Housing; Pirates' Cove food pantry, Title IX, Success Center and Instructional Innovation Center; and several academic programs.

Students who can't attend in-person will have the option to attend virtually on Canvas, via several pre-recorded workshops and presentations that will become available starting Aug. 22.