



# News Release

*Contact:*  
**Jason Parent**  
Development and  
College Relations Office  
33 Edgemont Drive  
Presque Isle, ME 04769  
Phone: (207) 768-2808  
Fax: (207) 768-2813  
jparent@nmcc.edu

**May 11, 2007**  
NR07051

## **Walker reaches milestone two decades of giving back to her college by inspiring those who follow in her footsteps**

**Aroostook County** - She has one of the most recognizable faces and voices in Aroostook County, but it's the story behind the success of Caribou's Betty Walker and the role that her alma mater Northern Maine Community College played in changing her life that has made her star shine the brightest in the eyes of two decades of students following in her footsteps.

Last week, Walker, as she has for the past 20 years, stood before students in the office administration programs at NMCC as the keynote speaker in a senior seminar and luncheon. The annual tradition featured personal and professional stories shared by Walker to inspire and provide valuable information to the soon-to-be graduates before they head out into the professional world.

"I appreciate and consider it a privilege to be invited each year to speak to students. My goal is to be an encouragement to them," said Walker. "The message I hope to leave behind for students is to always do your best no matter what you do. Whether you end up as a manager of a department somewhere or you end up scrubbing toilets – always do your best."

Toward that end, Walker relates several stories of challenges and opportunities she has faced and embraced in her personal and professional career and passes along numerous "pearls of wisdom" to the next generation of NMCC business department graduates, including one of her favorite sayings: "Every job is a self-portrait of those who do it. So autograph your work with quality. Quality only happens when you care enough to do your very best."

It's a mantra Walker has embodied in her work at Cary Medical Center for the past two decades. She began at Cary in 1986 as a secretary of rehabilitation services and has worked her way up the ranks to her current position coordinating the hospital's volunteer program and as a staff member for the Seniority Program. Earlier this year, Walker was tapped with the new responsibility of patient representative.

In Walker's presentation to the NMCC students entitled "Keys to Personal Success," she covers topics such as integrity, communication skills, confidentiality, interpersonal skills, and the importance of having a good sense of humor. She also shares how important attitude is to an individual's success in the working world and in their personal lives.

Walker is a walking example of the very message she imparts. Before enrolling as a student at Northern Maine Vocational Technical Institute (a forerunner of NMCC) nearly 24 years ago, she was a single parent with three daughters – one of them with special needs – living on welfare and food stamps.

"I did not know how to drive nor did I own a car. It was my desire to get off welfare and somehow support my daughters on my own," said Walker. "God answers prayers. Some members of my church family got together and gave me a 1972 Plymouth, I learned to drive, got my license and then God opened a door for me to attend NMCC."

Walker credits divine intervention with opening the door but acknowledges the invitation to sit down and get comfortable at the College came from those who inspired and encouraged her to do her best.

"NMCC opened their arms to me. Being a nontraditional student who had been out of school for many, many years, I was scared," said Walker. "The instructors are what stand out in my mind – assisting, encouraging, listening, and always finding a way to help me do my best. I believe I received an excellent education and training."

Two individuals Walker holds in the highest regard, and credits in part for her success, are NMCC instructors Ann Osgood and Paula York who have 27 and 26 years of service respectively on the Presque Isle campus. The esteem with which Walker holds Osgood and York is reciprocated by the two instructors, who have invited their former student back to speak to a new crop each of the last 20 years.

"When she presents her motivational talk, she encourages and inspires those in the audience. Many of them hear of her accomplishments and successes and realize they too can overcome obstacles they are presently facing. Her message instills 'hope,' said Osgood.

"Betty paints a realistic picture of her personal and professional life. She gives credit for her 'victories' to her daughters, to her friends, to her church family, and to the NMCC community. She never boasts that it was an easy journey," said York.

Walker not only gives back to NMCC each year by inspiring the senior office administration program students, she also serves as the chairperson of the NMCC office administration advisory board.

Her tradition of imparting wisdom on the NMCC student body actually began at her graduation from the College in 1986 when she was selected as that year's student speaker for commencement.

“Her speech actually preceded Senator Bill Cohen’s address to the graduates that year. I remember the Senator starting his remarks by saying “she is a hard act to follow,” said Osgood.

That same year, Walker was the recipient of the medical office administration program academic achievement award. In 1989, she served as Osgood’s replacement, while the instructor was on maternity leave.

“If I have been an encouragement to the students, then I have been a success,” said Walker.

#####



*Betty Walker of Caribou delivers the senior seminar address for the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year to students and faculty in the Northern Maine Community College office administration programs.*