

Marilyn Hodge

New TCC dean of student services - recently transplanted from New York - enjoys working with students and helping to change lives

INTERVIEW BY VICTORIA BOURNE | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

ALL CLASSES have begun at Tidewater Community College, and Marilyn Hodge is a little over a month into her gig as the Virginia Beach campus' new dean of student services.

She's been working 12-hour days, which she calls "par for the course," meeting with at-risk students, registering students and tending to the many other things that occur behind the scenes of a busy community college at the beginning of a new semester.

Hodge, a New York transplant, said the transition to her new Virginia Beach home has been wonderful. As an empty-nester and widow, she said she'd reached a point in her personal life where she was wanting to downsize and simplify.

"New York is an intense place to be," she said, and she was ready for a change. Her new job is "going very well," she said.

Hodge's passion for student services began in 1974 when she was recruited to become a student aide at Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York.

"I decided it was my calling," she said. Hodge has two decades of experience in higher education, all spent within community colleges.

"I chose the community college path because I know community colleges play a significant role in educating a workforce that come from middle-class backgrounds," said Hodge, who is

Bio

Full name Marilyn Hodge

Hometown New York

Marital status Widow

Children Adam, 28; Eric, 27; and Ashley, 27

Occupation Higher education administrator

Education B.A., Brooklyn College (CUNY); M.A., New York University; M.A., Columbia University; Ed.D., Columbia University; post doctorate, Harvard University

Community service My particular interest is working with abused single mothers, and homeless persons interested in returning to school.

Church affiliation Episcopal

Hobbies Gardening, finding a new beach

Personal motto Finish what you start.

Ivy-League educated and was the first in her family to attend college.

"It's no exaggeration to say that we change lives everyday," she said.

What are you looking forward to most in your new position?

Partnering with academic affairs to help our students persist in their courses, graduate and successfully transfer. I recognize that our youth cannot be competitive in today's marketplace without a higher education and employable job skills. Secondly, I hope to become a positive role model to our TCC students, and when they see me, as their dean, it will represent to them

that anything is possible, if you want it bad enough and are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to realize that dream.

What challenges do you expect to face? I expect that my main challenge will be to balance my administrative responsibilities with my desire for direct contact with as many students as possible. I come from a counseling background and enjoy working with students, empowering them to be the best that they can be.

What do you enjoy most about working in the field of higher education? Making a difference in the lives of those who would not normally have the opportunity to receive a quality education. When you can accomplish this, not only are you helping to change the life of that one student, but you are positively impacting their children, family unit and their community in a very significant way.

What role do you play as dean of student services? The dean of students oversees campus services such as admissions, financial aid, records and registration, counseling, student activities, testing, tutoring, veterans' affairs, transfer, career services and employment services.

If a snapshot was taken of you enjoying a perfect day, what would it look like? Tending to my garden

Favorite gadget My new GPS

Favorite movies "Forrest Gump,"



COURTESY PHOTO PROVIDED BY TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"E.T.," "An Officer and a Gentleman"

A recently read book you'd recommend "The World is Flat"

Pet peeve People who like to complain without offering a positive solution

Describe yourself Passionate with a sense of humor

A recently discovered Virginia Beach favorite Still discovering.

Comfort food Ice cream

A TV show you never miss CNN news

Something you've done that others might not expect of you Moving so quickly to a new town, not knowing anyone

If you could invite three famous people, living or dead, to dinner, who would they be? Nelson Mandela, President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama

Good luck charm My mother's wedding ring, which I wear

First words of wisdom you ever received and from whom I came from a very classic West Indian family, there were many.