

Trustee Student

Past
Board
Member

Dr. Bob Fry's formal photograph in a suit and tie hangs with the portraits of trustees in the first floor hall of the General Educa-

tion Building. The well-known orthodontist and civic leader was a JCCC board member from 1987 to 1993, serving as chair 1988 to 1990. He was on the board during a time of rapid growth for student enrollment and facilities, a time when four new buildings were completed, including the Carlsen Center. Fry was a consultant in the JCCC dental hygiene program for 20 years and has been a member of the JCCC foundation board of directors since 1985.

Now Fry has an alter ego – that of welding student. He traded his GQ wear for suede coveralls, a bandanna and protective goggles during a 4-credit-hour *Welding Processes* class, taught by Mioshi Neal, adjunct associate professor. Fry's motivation for welding skills is to be able to "fix things" like farm implements and metal shelves and do ornamental work.

"I study a lot. Look at this textbook; it's difficult," he said pointing to the class book. "And there's a lot of material that is not in the book that Mioshi has to coach you on."

But don't let Fry fool you. He knows a bit about welding. He earned his way through 11 years of post-secondary school – college, dental school and an orthodontic residency – as an ironworker. He was a card-carrying member of Ironworkers Local Union #10, working for big construction firms in Kansas City, welding, doing cutting-torch jobs and hanging beams.

"But welding has changed so much in 40 years," Fry said. "Welding takes a lot more knowledge than I remember it did."

He takes direction from Neal seriously as he heats metal to 1,600 degrees F, puddles it and adds filler during an oxy-fuel welding exercise in the lab.

"You have to work at this. Welders are very intelligent," Fry said as he wielded a torch.

It was during his years as a trustee that he gained appreciation for the mission of a community college.

"As a trustee, I learned that a community college has to be responsive to the whole community – not just degree-seeking students.

That includes Ph.D. career people at the top of their game who want to remain at the top of their game and people who want to renew old skills," Fry said.

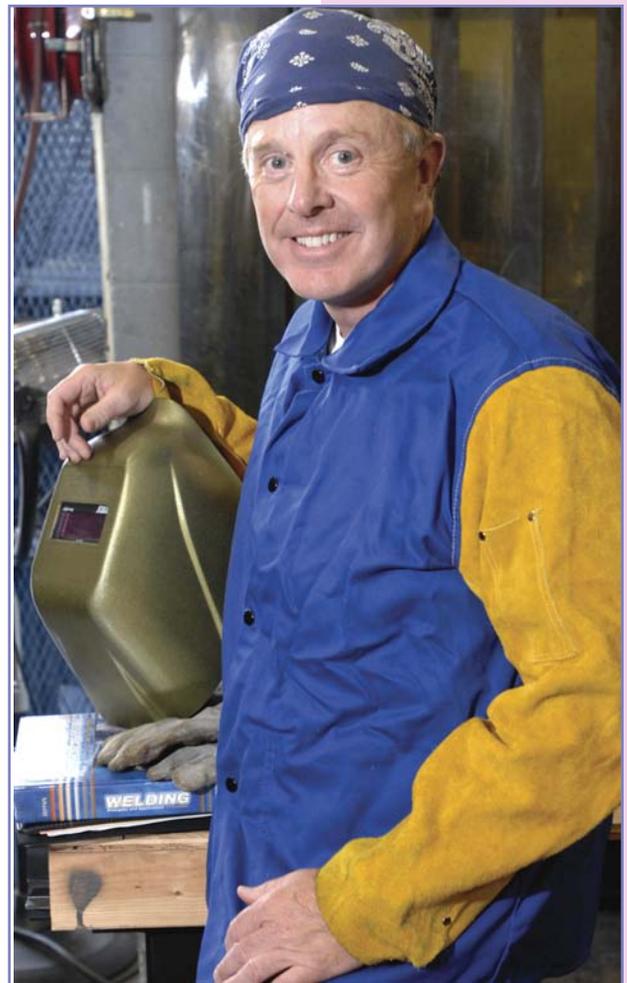
Fry and his wife Mary, coordinator, Play Therapy certification program, Mid America Nazarene University, want to take a variety of JCCC classes when more free time becomes available. Fry wants to enroll especially in history classes, which he didn't have time for in college.

"I've enjoyed my association with the college. I've had about every other position here so I decided to try being a student," Fry quipped.

The Overland Park/Olathe/Stanley orthodontist says it is fun being back in class again although, for an "old guy," registering online was a challenge. He did have the advantage of knowing his way around campus (welding labs and classroom and the welding shed were added in 1993 during Fry's tenure as trustee).

When Fry left the board, he was quoted as saying that the board's role was to spend 95 percent of its time dealing with the future and 5 percent with the present. Student Fry was asked if he still agreed with that.

"Absolutely," he said.



Former JCCC board member Dr. Bob Fry wears his protective gear in the welding lab.