

# Graduation Schedule

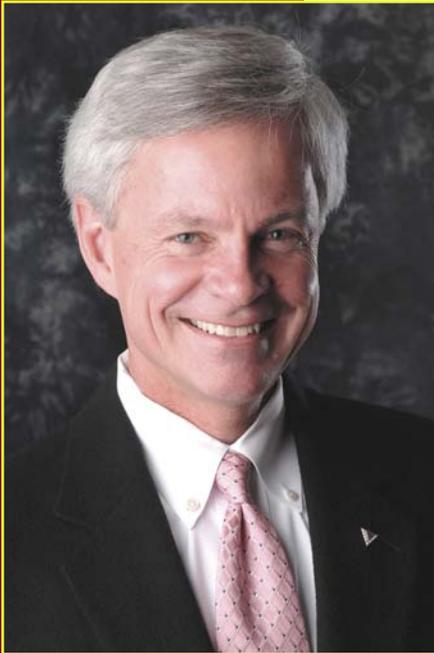
Johnson County Community College will have its commencement exercises at 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 18, in the Gymnasium.

Rod Risley, executive director, Phi Theta Kappa, will be the speaker.

The GED graduation is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 15, in the Gymnasium. Staff Sgt. Dale McKee, U.S. Army, will be the keynote speaker.

## Other graduations:

- Respiratory Care, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 16, Polsky Theatre
- Nursing Pinning, 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 16, Yardley Hall
- Honors Graduation, 7 p.m. Thursday, May 17, room 211 of the Carlsen Center
- Dental Hygiene, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 17, Polsky Theatre
- Cosmetology, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 22, Polsky Theatre
- LPN Pinning, 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 23, Polsky Theatre



Rod Risley

## Risley Speaks at JCCC Commencement

Executive director of Phi Theta Kappa Rod Risley will be the speaker for JCCC's commencement at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 18, in the Gymnasium. A reception follows in the Commons Plaza.

Risley was PTK's national president in 1974-75 while a student at San Jacinto College, Texas, where he earned his bachelor's degree. He joined PTK's headquarters staff in 1977 as director of alumni affairs and became associate director in 1982. In 1985, he was named the second-ever executive director for the society.

Under his leadership PTK, the international honor society of the two-year college, has experienced unparalleled growth expanding from 550 chapters to more than 1,200. Chapters have been chartered in all 50 states, U.S. Territories, Canada, Germany, the British Virgin Islands,

Republics of Palau, Micronesia and Marshall Islands, and United Arab Emirate. The society inducts nearly 100,000 students annually and is the largest honor society in higher education in terms of chapters and number of members.

Risley helped conceive and launch PTK's nationally acclaimed Leadership Development Studies Program, All-USA Academic Team for Community Colleges, All-State Academic Team program and Guistwhite Scholarship program.

Under Risley, procurement of scholarship funds for PTK members has been a top priority. Today, more than 600 four-year colleges and universities offer \$36 million in scholarships exclusively for PTK members.

Central to the recent growth of PTK is Risley's

leadership on new collaborations with the National Honor Society, National Collegiate Honors Council, National Science Foundation, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, Coca-Cola Foundation, Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, Better World Books, Ford Motor Company and MBNA.

While serving as executive director, Risley earned a master's of business administration degree from Millsaps College, Jackson, Miss., and is currently completing his doctoral dissertation in the Community College Leadership Program at Mississippi State University, Starkville.

In 2007, Risley was elected chair of the Mississippi Humanities Council and will serve as the

council's representative to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Risley has served as a grant reviewer for the National Science Foundation and AACC, and a national judge for the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship Foundation and Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation. In 2001, he was named a Fellow in the Mid-South Community College Fellowship Program. Risley was presented Distinguished Alumni Awards by the American Association of Community Colleges and San Jacinto College. He was recently elected to serve on the board for the Mississippi Center for Non-Profits.

Risley leads a staff of 70 at the PTK headquarters located in Jackson, Miss.

# Speaker Knows GED Firsthand

**S**taff Sgt. Dale McKee will be the speaker for the GED graduation at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, May 15, in the Gymnasium. A reception follows in the Common Plaza.

"I am not talking about the benefits of the Army at the GED graduation," McKee said. "I am talking about the accomplishments I've had as a result of earning my GED. I am going to congratulate the graduates and tell them they should be proud of their achievement. A GED is not something to take lightly."

McKee has a close association with Project Finish, sponsored by JCCC and the Johnson County Library. In his job as an Army recruiter in Olathe, McKee sees to it that recruits have the necessary qualifications – including a GED – to go on to active service. If lacking the prerequisites, "future soldiers," as McKee prefers to call recruits, are directed to the Olathe Center's Project Finish to complete their GED preparation and tests.

"I can't say enough good things about the teachers and staff at Project Finish," McKee said. "They are not judgmental. They are very respectful and supportive of everybody."

A native of Baxter Springs, he was 20 before he completed a GED while working as a car mechanic in Chicago. When McKee decided to pursue a career in law enforcement, he earned an

associate's degree in criminal justice from Labette Community College, Parsons. An investigator for the city of Parsons encouraged McKee to join the military police. So at age 26, McKee enlisted in the Army to help with his career and pay off student loans. That was 10 years ago, and McKee has served at U.S. bases and been deployed twice – to Bosnia in 1998 and to Qatar in 2003. He will serve 36 months as a recruiter and is in the process of applying to be an agent in the Army Criminal Investigation Division.

"I am honored to be the speaker at JCCC's GED graduation," he said.

