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## Lifetime of Dedication to Trinidad State

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Originally born in Enid, OK, Miriam “Mimi” Zappanti is a Trinidad native in everything but birth.

Her father, Charles Barrack, was born and raised in Trinidad. After he left to serve during WW2, her mother relocated to Oklahoma. Upon returning from the war the family would reunite in Trinidad, where Mimi was raised. She holds the distinction of being a member of the last graduating class from Holy Trinity before the school was renamed Trinidad Catholic.



Miriam “Mimi” Zappanti

After high school, Mimi’s educational aspirations would bring her to Denver where she earned an undergraduate degree from Loretto Heights College in 1966. She quickly enrolled at the University of Denver, graduating with her master’s degree in 1968.

But Trinidad was never far from her heart. After working for a time in Denver, she accepted a position at Trinidad State in 1973 as a part-time instructor. This would launch a distinguished 33-year career.

As her commitment to Trinidad State deepened, Zappanti embraced an opportunity in 1980 in the Adult Education-GED program—first as an instructor, although she would eventually become the program’s Director.

During these decades, Mimi would help many students secure their GED, preparing them to move forward with a key credential.

“We had hundreds and hundreds of GED graduates during my time here,” Mimi explained. “Thousands came through my doors. The thing that pleases me most is that I can honestly say I’ve affected my community for the better.”

Along the way, Mimi would write grants to secure key funding for the program. Over time, this high-level skill set led to Mimi securing additional grants for other academic programs at Trinidad State.

“As an administrator and grant writer, Mimi increased the visibility, viability, and resources for numerous programs,” noted Toni DeAngelis, Executive Director for the Trinidad State College Foundation. “She understood that without resources, programs were limited in what they could achieve. She took a pragmatic approach to every grant that came across her desk.”



Mimi with Toni DeAngelis of the Trinidad State College Foundation

Mimi’s success in securing private, state, and multimillion dollar federal grants for Trinidad State remains a testimony to her enduring impact.

But it was always the students that mattered most.

Reflecting later in her career, Mimi spoke with pride. “Our graduates became teachers in public schools, mechanics, and graduates from 4-year business schools. One student became the head of the math program at another college. Students who were once housekeepers became LPNs.”

Following her retirement in 2006, Zappanti extended her commitment to the College by serving as board member and, eventually, as President of the Trinidad State College Foundation. These years span from 2009-2015. She provided additional support both as a volunteer and through personal donations.

In 2018, Mimi Zappanti was elected to the Trinidad State College Foundation’s Hall of Fame. In his nomination letter, Foundation member, Ken Dochter, said, “I’ve been privileged to observe the extent of involvement the ‘Mim’ has dedicated towards the well-being of Trinidad State and its students.”

“Her knowledge and expertise are also well suited to maintaining the inner workings and necessities of college operations,” he added. Ken went on to stress that Mimi has been instrumental in Trinidad State building bright futures for tomorrow’s leaders.



Mimi and her husband, Jim, share a moment with former Colorado Rockies player, Todd Helton

At the same time Mimi’s brother, David, described being raised by parents who believed in giving back to the community through employment, volunteerism and support. “Mimi epitomizes this belief.”

During her acceptance of the nomination Mimi was characteristically humble, emphasizing the impact on students, and being most proud that her three sons all graduated from Trinidad State.

Mimi’s commitment and dedication to Trinidad State also includes an endowed scholarship she established with her husband, Jim. The “Miriam and James Zappanti Family Scholarship Fund” supports students enrolled in in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) curriculum. As a permanently endowed scholarship, their fund will support students for generations to come.

Trinidad State is grateful for the enduring impact created by Mimi Zappanti during her decades-long career. She touched the lives of hundreds of students. She secured key resources for many academic areas. And her volunteer efforts continue to strengthen Trinidad State to this day.

To learn more about establishing a scholarship at Trinidad State, please contact Toni DeAngelis, Foundation Director, at [toni.deangelis@trinidadstate.edu](mailto:toni.deangelis@trinidadstate.edu) or 719-846-5520.

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