

# HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE

---

In 1959, the Florida Legislature authorized the creation of the Junior College of Broward County. The proposed location was the former Forman Field in Davie, a training site for World War II Naval aviators. As construction began at the former Forman Field site, the Junior College of Broward County opened its doors to its first class of 701 students in fall of 1960. They attended classes in buildings that were formerly part of Naval Air Station Junior High on the Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport property. Dr. John Allen, president of the University of South Florida, addressed the college's first graduating class, 73 students, at War Memorial Auditorium on June 10, 1962. Among its members was Paris Nelson Glendening, who went on to serve two terms as Maryland's 59th governor. The Junior College of Broward County's first permanent building was completed in August 1963 when the college officially moved to the Central Campus.

## Leadership, Name Changes, and Expansion

Dr. Joe B. Rushing, President of Broward College since its founding in 1959, resigned in 1965. He was succeeded by Dr. Myron Blee, director of the Office for Emergency Planning in Washington, D.C. Dr. Blee was in turn succeeded by Dr. A. Hugh Adams, who assumed his duties as president on April 15, 1968.

Florida's junior colleges originally were governed by boards of public instruction, which also governed elementary and secondary instruction in each county. In 1968, the same year the JCBC changed its name to Broward Junior College, the Florida Legislature removed junior colleges from the county school boards' purview and turned the colleges' advisory boards into District Boards of Trustees.

In September 1970, the institution was renamed Broward Community College, a change that better reflected the comprehensive nature of the programs offered and its role in the community. Also in 1970, the Judson A. Samuels South Campus got its start in temporary headquarters adjacent to Memorial Hospital in Hollywood. North Campus, in Coconut Creek, was dedicated in 1972.

Dr. Adams served as president for 19 years. After he announced his intention to retire on December 31, 1986, the District Board of Trustees renamed the Central Campus the A. Hugh Adams Central Campus in his honor.

Named to succeed Dr. Adams was Dr. Willis Holcombe, executive vice-president at Brevard Community College, and a protégé of Dr. James Wattenbarger, architect of the state community college system. Before going to Brevard, Dr. Holcombe served at Broward Community College as a professor, executive assistant to President Adams, Central Campus academic dean, and then-Central Campus provost. He served as president for 17 years, from 1987 to 2004. Dr. Holcombe initiated efforts that led to significant growth in enrollment, facility and program expansion. He was also instrumental in creating a variety of innovative partnerships to benefit the College, its students, and the wider community. Dr. Holcombe retired in January 2004. Succeeding him as the College's fifth president was Dr. Larry Anthony Calderon, who served as president through December 2006.

Dr. Holcombe returned from retirement to serve as president until the District Board of Trustees appointed J. David Armstrong, Jr., the former chancellor of the Division of Community Colleges, as its sixth president. President Armstrong began work at the College in July 2007. Dr. Holcombe was appointed chancellor when President Armstrong took over.

In the summer of 2008, the College underwent a name change, to Broward College, after receiving approval from the State Board of Education and the Legislator to begin offering baccalaureate degree programs in teacher education. The College submitted a substantive change to its regional accreditation association SACSCOC and received approval to offer level two bachelor's degree programs. Broward College was also approved to offer students Title IV Student Financial Aid funds for all degree levels and eligible certificates. At the same time, the College began offering online associate degree programs in 13 areas.

In 2009, the institution received approval by the State Board of Education to offer four additional baccalaureate degree programs in nursing, information management, supervision and management, and technology management. Under President Armstrong's leadership, the College expanded its programs and locations, receiving national recognition for its innovation and student success initiative.

In December 2017, after more than ten years of leading developments and program expansion at the College, J. David Armstrong, Jr. announced plans to transition from his role. After a nationwide search which began in January 2018, the District Board of Trustees selected Gregory A. Haile, Esq. as the seventh president. President Haile assumed office on July 1, 2018. Prior to his appointment, President Haile served as the general counsel and vice president for Public Policy and Government Affairs for Broward College from September 2011 to June 2018.

In September 2023, Broward College welcomed its first female president, Dr. Barbara Bryan. Prior to becoming Acting President, Dr. Bryan served in leadership roles at Broward College for nearly three decades, after which the College honored her with a Proclamation for her dedicated leadership and for being a champion for education.

In February 2025, Broward College welcomed Torey Alston as the next President and Chief Executive Officer of Broward College. President Alston comes to the College with both executive education and governmental experience. Most recently, he worked as the executive director and CEO of the Greater Miami Expressway Agency, an independent state agency. Previously, he served on both the Broward County Commission and as chair of the School Board of Broward County. Alston is a former trustee of Florida A&M University and served twice on the leadership team of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. President Alston said he is excited to help bring Broward College to the next level. "I look forward to making Broward College the number one destination for academic excellence working with the Board, faculty, staff, students, alumni and the broader community."

## National Recognition

In October 2010, President Barack Obama announced the creation of the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence at the White House Summit on Community Colleges. The award, administered by the Aspen Foundation, was created to spotlight a sector of higher education that doesn't receive many accolades. The institute wanted to recognize outstanding academic and workforce outcomes and identify institutions to serve as models to elevate community-college education nationwide.

In April 2011, the institute announced that Broward College was among the top 120 community colleges, representing the top 10 percent in the country.

In 2012, Broward College moved a step higher and was named a Finalist for the Aspen Prize — a recognition that Broward College is one of the top 10 colleges nationwide.

In 2017, Broward College was awarded as a Finalist with Distinction, ranking it as one of the top three community colleges in the nation from a list of almost 1,000.

In 2018, the Aspen Institute again named Broward College as a top ten Finalist for the 2019 Aspen Prize.

In 2021, Broward College was again awarded as a Finalist with Distinction for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.

In 2023, Broward College was named a finalist for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the fifth time the College has been nominated.

Supporting the viability, vitality and robust growth of the communities they serve is an important part of the mission of Florida's publicly supported community colleges. With a half century of service to its community, none of the "Great 28" fulfills its mission better than Broward College.

For more information on the history of Broward College, please visit Broward College Archives & Special Collections on the Internet Archive: [archive.org/details/browardcollege](http://archive.org/details/browardcollege) (<http://archive.org/details/browardcollege>) or [libguides.broward.edu/content.php?pid=35492](http://libguides.broward.edu/content.php?pid=35492) (<http://libguides.broward.edu/content.php?pid=35492>).