

# Central Carolina Culinary Institute continues to grow

**BY R.V. HIGHT**  
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 COMMUNITY COLLEGE



**Chef Gregg Hamm is executive director of the Central Carolina Community College's Culinary Institute. To learn more about the Central Carolina Culinary Institute, contact Chef Gregg Hamm at 919-545-8070, e-mail him at ghamm@cccc.edu, or visit www.cccc.edu/culinaryarts for further information.**

SANFORD — Susan Seawell Sidden says she grew up in her grandmother's kitchen, watching her make biscuits, cakes, and fried chicken. It was her grandmother who taught her how to fix an over-easy egg.

Sidden, of Sanford, was a medical office manager for 25 years before she decided to attend classes at the Central Carolina Culinary Institute, a program of Central Carolina Community College.

Her class experience led to her becoming a private chef for several families and a chef/kitchen manager for a girls' academy.

"I have been blessed to have been able to participate in the CCCC culinary program. Having a new career that I totally love is fantastic," Sidden said. "My instructors cared about what we learned and made sure what we did were was done the right way."

Central Carolina Community College's Culinary Institute includes all aspects of the Culinary & Hospitality Arts programs, which include a Culinary Arts curriculum degree (associate in applied science) and the natural chef continuing education program. It's even possible for area high school students to begin their culinary coursework through the Career and College Promise program.

Central Carolina's growing culinary program currently is held on its Lee County Campus in Sanford and its Chatham County Campus in Pittsboro, with the program soon to expand to Harnett County at what will be the Dunn Center of the college.

Chef Gregg Hamm, executive director of the CCCC Culinary Institute, said there are plenty of jobs in the food service and hospitality industry.

"It's such a broad spectrum outside of just being in the kitchen, from dieticians to nutritionists to restaurant managers to resort management," he said.

The institute has continued to grow since its begin-

ning in 2011.

"We have room, but we have room because we're growing and we're expanding before we reach our capacity," said Hamm, who added that these programs allow him to continually grow his experience as a chef and help to inspire those who share the same goals and dreams.

Students who complete the CCCC Culinary Institute will be able to:

- Master the skills needed to operate a safe and sanitary food service facility.
- Design and price a culinary menu.
- Apply the standard and fundamental cooking methods of the culinary arts industry.
- Demonstrate and execute an off-site catered meal.
- Master the skills needed to be successful in the culinary industry.
- Identify and evaluate appropriate and necessary industry standards in culinary with a focus on healthy cooking.
- Identify and evaluate industry trends in culinary with a focus on farm-to-table cuisine.
- Demonstrate the general skills required for success in the culinary profession.

Students get great first-hand experience through the Natural Chef Café on the Chatham County Campus and the Cougar Café on the Lee County Campus. The Natural Chef Café is open for lunch two days per week and for dinner on one day

per week. The Cougar Café serves meals four days per week for CCCC's Lee Campus students, faculty and staff, and the public.

Hamm said the experience absolutely helps the students gain what they need as they learn the ability to make decisions in the kitchen.

"What we teach them in a textbook, we're backing up by giving them that hands-on experience and reinforcing it," he said. "So when they go into a work environment, they have quick decision-making skills and know how to move throughout the kitchen, even when a challenge comes about."

Janet Constantino of Cary is among the former students in the Central Carolina Culinary Institute's Natural Chef continuing education program.

"It was such a broad experience, and I learned so much about textures, flavors and the challenge of cooking for others with food allergies," she said. "I enjoyed the class very much. I feel like a better cook with more knowledge and experience to share with others."

Constantino recalls her memories from the CCCC program.

"Our service day in the kitchen gave me a whole new appreciation for those that are behind an oven serving guests their 'perfect' dish," she said.

Constantino noted that the program is an enriching experience for the casual

stay-at-home mom or the person who wants to move into the professional field.

With the training and job experience, Central Carolina Culinary Institute graduates may advance to positions such as sous chef, executive chef or food service manager.

"The possibilities are endless," Hamm said. "The jobs are endless."

Students can be assured of being trained by an accredited faculty led by Hamm, who came to the college in 2011 after 11 years as a hospital-ity and culinary arts teacher at Lee County Senior High School. Hamm, who attended Johnson and Wales University, is owner of two restaurants — Café 121 in Sanford and P.G. Werth's in Raleigh. The latter restaurant is named for an inspiring high school culinary arts teacher.

For those students who want training past the associate degree, CCCC has an articulation agreement with Johnson and Wales University that allow students who seek to continue their education and achieve a higher culinary degree.

No doubt, more and more individuals are learning about the Central Carolina Culinary Institute. This summer, it is expected that several foreign students will attend the program.

To learn more about the institute, contact Hamm at (919) 545-8070, email him at ghamm@cccc.edu, or visit www.cccc.edu/culinaryarts for further information.

## Legislature, Congress maps upheld by high court

**BY GARY D. ROBERTSON**  
 ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — The North Carolina Supreme Court Friday upheld the boundaries for General Assembly and congressional districts drawn by Republicans three years ago that helped the GOP strengthen its grip on legislative seats.

Nearly a year after hearing oral arguments on the maps, a majority on the state's highest court ruled that a three-judge panel was correct last year in determining the lines were lawful under the state and federal constitutions.

Two of the six sitting justices ruling in the case disagreed and said lawmakers wrongly packed black voters under the belief it would

provide them protection from litigation, and the maps should be revisited by the three judges. The case could wind up at the U.S. Supreme Court.

The maps, which were first used in the 2012 elections, have helped strengthen the grip of Republicans in state politics. The GOP holds comfortable margins over Democrats in the General Assembly and will carry 10 of the 13 seats in the state's U.S. House delegation starting in January.

Election and civil rights advocacy groups and Democratic voters sued over the maps, arguing the boundaries illegally clustered black voters in districts to benefit Republicans, creating oddly shaped

districts. Republicans said the districts were lawful and designed to protect the state from legal claims under the U.S. Voting Rights Act. The litigation focused on 30 districts — 27 for the General Assembly and three for Congress.

"We are proud to have broken the cycle set by previous legislatures that repeatedly saw their maps tossed out by the courts as illegal," Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett, and Sen. Bob Rucho, R-Mecklenburg, who oversaw the drawing of the maps in 2011, said in a release. During the 2000s, lawmakers were required to redraw legislative boundaries three times.

For 26 of the districts deemed subject to the

Voting Rights Act, the trial court panel determined that race was the predominant factor in forming their boundaries and thus required a higher level of scrutiny. Writing for the majority, Associate Justice Bob Edmunds said the panel didn't offer enough findings of fact to determine race was the leading factor and thus a lower level of scrutiny was applicable.

"Nonetheless, this error is not fatal and does not invalidate the trial court's order," Edmunds wrote, adding later in his 51-page opinion the boundaries still withstood the higher scrutiny and were thus lawful. The other four districts also met the law, the justice wrote.

## Hearing in Reynolds-Lorillard merger lawsuit cancelled

**BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

WILMINGTON, Del. — A Delaware judge has cancelled a hearing in a lawsuit challenging the planned \$25 billion merger of cigarette makers Reynolds American Inc. and Lorillard Inc.

No reason was given for the cancellation of Friday's hearing on a motion by plaintiffs who were seeking a preliminary injunction and a motion to expedite

the case.

The two companies last week announced that they would hold special shareholder meetings Jan. 28 in North Carolina, where both companies are headquartered, to vote on the merger.

The combination of the two companies would create a formidable competitor for Virginia-based market leader Altria Group, owner of Philip Morris USA.

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*I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below, with tiny lights like heaven's stars reflecting on the snow. The sight is so spectacular, please wipe away that tear for I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year. I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear, but the sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here. I have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring, for it is beyond description to hear the angels sing. I know how much you miss me, I see the pain inside your heart, for I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year. I can't tell you of the splendor or the peace here in this place. Can you just imagine Christmas with our savior face to face? I'll ask Him to lift your spirit as I tell Him of your love, so then pray for one another as you lift your eyes above. Please let your hearts be joyful and let your spirit sing, for I am spending Christmas in heaven and I'm walking with the King.*

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