

Ivy Tech Community College names Distinguished Alumnus of the Year

Kerri Cokeley, a graduate of the Sellersburg campus of Ivy Tech Community College who exemplifies the life-changing experience Ivy Tech can provide, has been named the statewide Ivy Tech Community College Distinguished Alumnus of 2008.

The Jeffersonville, Ind. native was presented with the award by the Ivy Tech Board of Trustees and Sellersburg regional Chancellor Rita Shourds Thursday at the Lawrenceburg campus.

A panel of judges selected Cokeley from candidates nominated by Ivy Tech campuses around the state. Qualifications include outstanding professional achievement and a solid record of volunteer leadership and efforts. Competitors included corporate vice presidents, government leaders and other graduates whose success and contributions to their community attest to the quality of Ivy Tech and its alumni.

Of Cokeley, one judge stated, "She shines in each and every way." Another noted, "It is clear that enrolling at Ivy Tech was the turning point in her life."

College was never a consideration in Cokeley's hardworking family – her high school diploma was considered a breakthrough achievement. Working as a waitress, she accepted an offer for an office job a family member arranged, but she had no further plans. Her new boss encouraged her to try Ivy Tech and Cokeley reluctantly enrolled in one course. Ignited by her experience, she never looked back.

In 2003, Cokeley graduated magna cum laude with an associate degree in business administration. Enrolling at IU on a Lee Hamilton Scholarship, she went on to earn a bachelor's and an MBA from the IU School of Business, and was one of 74 undergraduates nationwide chosen by the Harvard Business School for its Summer Program in Management.

While pursuing her degrees, she committed several thousand hours toward community service leadership. She created and taught a CAD class for at-risk students, and secured a \$100,000 software donation to introduce middle school students to engineering and technology.

She served as chapter and regional officer of Phi Theta Kappa international two-year college honorary society, leading efforts for 9/11 and Asian tsunami relief, Project Graduation and SOAR, and she successfully proposed a scholarship to promote leadership, service and scholarship among low-income students. At IU, she received an Undergraduate Research Fellowship to help people start nonprofit organizations and businesses. Copyrighted by IU, the resources she produced are in their second edition.

Currently she is Associate Director of Community Building for the Metro United Way of Louisville, working with 76 agencies. Her supervisor, Howard G. Mason, says Cokeley is "helping transform our region through her work. With new technology and methods, she has pioneered community input as a process to instigate change."

Cokeley was honored by a consortium of southern Indiana community foundations with an Emerging Woman in Philanthropy Award, and is recipient of the American Association of Community Colleges Award for the state of Indiana, the IU Volunteer of the Bell Award and Outstanding Service Award, and the Metro United Way Volunteer of the Year and the Louisville Science Center Volunteer Award. She was also nominee for the national NFL Community Quarterback Award.

She has served as Advisory Board member for Indiana Campus Compact and president of the Ivy Tech Sellersburg Alumni Association, which she initiated and helped organize.

She also served on the Board of Directors of the Obelisk Federal Credit Union in southern Indiana during a key transition.

The following received Ivy Tech Alumnus of the Year Awards from their regional campuses:

Evansville	Paul V. Brenner
Fort Wayne	Chuck Pastor
Kokomo	Jean Koch
Madison	William F. Anderson
Northwest	Lauren Arnold
Richmond	Kathleen G. Campbell
Sellersburg	Kerri Cokeley
South Bend	Darryl Boykins

Ivy Tech Community College is one of the nation's largest singly-accredited statewide community college systems and the state's second largest public post-secondary institution with nearly 120,000 students enrolled annually. Ivy Tech has 23 campuses throughout Indiana. It serves as the state's engine of workforce development, offering affordable degree programs and training that are aligned with the needs of its community along with courses and programs that transfer to other colleges and universities in Indiana. It is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.