

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE RISING PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION
MONTHLY MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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Maintaining a Good
Work-Life Balance

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Nghi Nguyen still remembers it was around the spring of 2014 when Dr. Ja'Bette Lozupone asked him to join what was then known as the Montgomery College Young Professionals Association. His first thought was: "This sounds boring." Of course, he didn't say that to his BFF Ja'Bette. They had known each other for some time while working on the Germantown Campus. So, he told her, he would think about joining the association.

He did end up joining MCYPA in June of 2014... and the rest is history. Past forward to June 2022 (the association was now known as the Rising Professionals instead of the Young Professionals), and Nghi was in a room filled with other RPA members celebrating the association's 10-year anniversary.

As Nghi tells it, without a doubt, MCRPA has been the best part of his career here at Montgomery College. He started working at the College in January 2008 in what was then called the Distance Learning office. Now, it is Office of E-learning, Innovation, and Teaching Excellence.

"When I joined MCRPA back then, I just thought we would all hang out after work for social hours," said Nghi. "But after awhile, we were doing so much more: volunteering, membership retreats, other fun and engaging professional and personal workshops."

Furthermore, he adds that without MCRPA, he wouldn't have met so many people who would push him to get out there and meet other people who work at the College. His participation in RPA has

allowed him to be more outgoing and to be part of other committees at MC that he would never have thought he would participate. He will be serving as the Chair of Staff Council this year, plus he is also busy chairing the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islanders Heritage Month Planning Committee and Staff Enrichment Day Planning Committee, among other things.

"I used to hate putting myself out there, especially at work because I don't like to be in the spotlight," said Nghi. "Being part of MCRPA and meeting people like Tilandra, Christine, Nik, Ja'Bette, Eniola, Jeremi, and so many others have really helped me to be more outgoing."

For Nghi, work-life balance is most important. At work, he does a lot of videos, websites, and many other things. When people ask him what he does, he just says website to simplify everything that he actually does in ELITE. Recording videos is one of his fun duties at work. He gets to work with so many people at the College whether helping them with their website or recording a video for their unit and/or classes. Of course, Nghi says the bloopers are always the best when doing videos with faculty, staff, and students.

At home, he spends a lot of time working on his creative writing and tennis. He has self-published his poetry collection book via Amazon that contains over 500 of his poems that he had written since he was around 13 years old. And currently, he is also working on self-publishing his short story collection novel.

"I think it's very important to balance your work and life," said Nghi. "You work all day, and sometimes I am answering emails back and forth with colleagues at 1AM, but at the end of the day, you need to know what you love outside of work. For me, they are creative writing, travel, and tennis."





One of the best travel experiences for Nghi is doing the Study Abroad Program at Montgomery College. He went with the program to London in January 2018, and this past March, joined the short-term trip to Eastern Shore for the Pathway to Freedom: An Examination of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Trail. He also went with Student Life for a Hurricane Relief trip to New Jersey a few years back. Outside of these trips, he has also traveled to Iceland, United Arab Emirates, and Spain. For the United Arab Emirates and Spain trips, he went with his travel friend and MCRPA member Jeremi Lecuyer.

“I know for years, MCRPA spoke about doing group travel and this past June, we made it happen with our cruise to Bermuda,” said Nghi. “I am also looking forward to the Mexico trip next year.”

For Nghi, he loves the people he works and interacts with at the College, and these individuals come from MCRPA, the different divisions and units, and the community leaders and members whom he meets at some of the events he volunteers for such as Mobile Market. He believes that everyone should go out there and meet people. If any MC colleague is not part of MCRPA, then they should think about join.

“Don’t just go to work and go home,” said Nghi. “I hear people complain about how there’s nothing much going on in their life beside work and go home, but then they don’t want to do anything outside of sitting in the office and staring at the monitors all day.”

Nghi advises colleagues to get out there and join committees, be part of the College. Outside of MCRPA, there is Governance, Staff Enrichment Day, and so many other areas where people can get to meet new faces at the College. Many of the events that MCRPA holds every year are via Zoom. Colleagues don't need to get out of their office to meet new people.

"You can't complain about your work going in one direction if you don't bring yourself out there to meet other people at the College," said Nghi. "There are many opportunities like MCRPA, the Hispanic Serving Institutions, the Staff Enrichment Day Committee, the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution... so many groups you can be part of at the College. Get off that computer and start being the change at MC!"

Nghi says that all it takes is for you to join one committee at MC to meet people who might end up being your life-long friends outside of work. Maybe they like a sport that you like or love to travel like you do, or have kids the same age as yours. You can create that work-life balance by building your network, and sometimes it can start right here at MC.

"Rising Professionals Association has been the key for me to build my network," said Nghi. "Now I'm traveling and playing tennis with Jeremi, going to musicals and concerts with Christine, and dressing up as Chucky for Halloween during our MCRPA Halloween Gathering."

Most importantly, when he has a work-related question, Nghi knows his colleagues are just a phone call or email away. And all of these connections came from being part of MCRPA.

