

# SFSC awarded Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant

## Partnership with CareerSource Heartland and AdventHealth for new Healthcare Apprenticeship Program

### Special to Highlands News-Sun

AVON PARK — South Florida State College (SFSC) is one of seven colleges in Florida awarded with the Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant.

During the 2019 Legislative Session, Governor Ron DeSantis worked with the Florida Legislature to secure historic funding for Florida's students and families, including \$10 million dedicated to career and technical education for the newly created Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program. The program provides competitive grants to eligible institutions to create or expand apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.

SFSC was awarded the grant toward a new Advanced Patient Care Technician (APCT) Apprenticeship program in partnership with CareerSource Heartland and AdventHealth. The program will prepare

apprentices for employment as nursing assistants, home health aides and healthcare support occupations encompassing skills in phlebotomy and electrocardiography.

"This apprenticeship program establishes an opportunity to address the existing workforce gaps especially in our hospital(s) service area. The program also creates meaningful career opportunities for the residents of our local counties," said Randy Surber, chief executive officer (CEO) for AdventHealth.

"It has been a challenge for years to fill such positions and to train and retain individuals at this level of care provision," said Elsie Graves, chief nursing office (CNO) at AdventHealth.

Her perspective on the need to establish such an apprenticeship is that "We always, always need more hands at the bedside. The support such individuals provide can decrease caregiver burn-out, provide meaningful work for a community in need, create a life-changing path to success while expanding employees' skillsets. Participation in such a program has

tremendous potential to foster economic independence for individuals and their families and opens the door to other career opportunities."

The two-year apprenticeship program begins in January 2020 with an anticipated first cohort enrollment of 12.

"SFSC is grateful for Governor DeSantis' support of the Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant," said Dr. Michele Heston, dean of health sciences at SFSC. "The demand for the role of the Advanced Patient Care Technician will address the need for a skilled workforce in health services by contributing to the economic development of the region served.

"The creation of an earn-while-you-learn opportunity for individuals, who otherwise would not be able to advance their careers, will build a more confident and resilient workforce."

For more information about the new Advanced Patient Care Technician (APCT) Apprenticeship program, call 863-784-7027 or email [healthsciences@southflorida.edu](mailto:healthsciences@southflorida.edu).

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# The Hit Men ready to rock the hits

By **MARC VALERO**  
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — The Hit Men, a supergroup of musicians who have performed in the studio and on stage with dozens of legendary stars, will take the stage at South Florida State College at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 4. In the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts, you will hear the classic rock songs these five talented sidemen were a part of when they performed with the biggest names in rock history

Keyboardist and group

founder Lee Shapiro spoke with Highlands News-Sun recently about his musical background, which included replacing Bob Gaudio in the Four Seasons.

"I was with Frankie [Valli] through the 1970s and when I left I ended up working with Tommy James for a couple of years," he said. Then he didn't perform on stage for many years, but he knew the other musicians that would become The Hit Men through his work in jingles and recording.

When the Broadway play "Jersey Boys" was so big, he spoke to Valli about putting a band together to perform the hits. Valli told him he was one of the Four Seasons so go do it. Now The Hit Men have been



COURTESY PHOTO

**The Hit Men will perform the classic rock songs they were a part of. The concert is Saturday, Jan. 4 at South Florida State College.**

performing for 10 years.

Along with Shapiro, The Hit Men includes lead guitarist/vocalist Jimmy Ryan, bassist/vocalist Jeff Ganz, (Johnny Winter, Village People, Leon Russel and Dr. John) keyboardist, percussionist and vocalist Russ Velazquez (The Ramones, Chicago, Luther Vandross and Michael Bolton) and drummer and vocalist Steve

Murphy (Alan Parsons, The Turtles, Three Dog Night.)

"We don't do any songs unless we were in the band, we toured with the band or we were on the record," Shapiro said. "Like Jimmy Ryan, he was with Carly Simon for 21 years, he is the guitarist on "You're so Vain," and he created that solo.

"He recorded with Elton John and Paul McCartney.

We are the real guys so that is where we grab our tunes from."

The whole show is full of hits they had something to do with and they will share backstories from their experiences on stage and in the studio.

"They [audience] are going to see video archives of us actually performing with the people whose songs we are playing now," he said. For example, when the group performs the Four Seasons' "December, 1963 (Oh, What a Night)" there will be video of Shapiro performing the song in 1976 on the "Midnight Special" television show.

"We tell the people, 'You will leave the theater happier and younger than when you got there,'"

Shapiro said.

The members of The Hit Men have appeared on over 85 albums, won multiple gold and platinum recording awards, Emmy nominations, Telly Awards, Clio Awards and more, including the first-ever Road Warriors Award from the Musicians Hall of Fame and Museum.

Tickets for The Hit Men are \$28, \$22, \$15, and child/student tickets are \$10. Groups of 13 or more receive a 25% discount.

Tickets can be purchased online at [sfscarts.org](http://sfscarts.org), by phone at 863-784-7178, or in person at the SFSC Performing Arts Box Office on the Highlands Campus of South Florida State College at 600 West College Drive in Avon Park.

# More Women Choosing SFSC's EMT Program to Begin a Career

By **DEBORAH BELL LATTER**

Special To The Herald-Advocate

South Florida State College (SFSC) has seen more women in its fall 2019 emergency medical technician (EMT) career certificate program than in the past. In fact, eight out of 13 students in the class are women.

Jennifer Serrano, instructor in SFSC's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) programs, was a student at the College 10 years ago when the majority of the students were male.

"EMS has been a predominantly male field," Serrano said. "But the culture has changed. It's great to see the shift of having more females who want to make this their career, pursuing their dreams, being mentors for other women, and giving back to their communities. Working in EMS is an exciting career which requires critical thinking, while challenging you every day."

According to the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, men make up approximately 70 percent of the EMTs in the United States.

"Over the years, we have seen more women entering the workforce," Serrano said. "SFSC's

EMS program has also experienced that growth and it's had a positive impact on our recruitment. As an instructor, it's amazing to see such a diversified group of individuals in our program."

EMTs function as part of an emergency rescue and transportation team by responding to emergency calls through a dispatch system, operating emergency vehicles safely, assessing scenes of accidents or illnesses, setting priorities for treating patients based on their degree of illness or injury, providing pre-hospital emergency care to treat trauma, shock, wounds, and other medical issues.

SFSC's EMT program runs for 16 weeks. Upon completion of the program, graduates are eligible to apply to take the Florida EMT Certification Exam.

For information about SFSC's EMT program and other Emergency Medical Services programs, visit [southflorida.edu](http://southflorida.edu) or call 863-784-7272.

*Deborah Bell Latter is the coordinator of internal communications at South Florida State College and can be reached at 863-784-7251 or [Deborah.Latter@southflorida.edu](mailto:Deborah.Latter@southflorida.edu).*



COURTESY PHOTO

**Eight of the 13 students studying to become emergency medical technicians in the current class at South Florida State College are women – a growing trend. Pictured are: (front row, from left) Jack Arseneau, Seth Hamilton, Nayeli Valerio, Valcine Jacques, Yeivette Ortiz-Quintero, and Demetrius Gross; (middle row, from l) Daniel Young, Teana Cunningham, Robert Choate, and David Espinoza; and (back, from r) Jennifer Serrano, instructor, and Erin Dowdal. Not pictured: Lindsey Day, Bridget Maddox, and Courtney Moctezuma.**

# SFSC Graduates Cele

For the South Florida State College (SFSC) graduates who gathered in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on Thursday, Dec. 12, the 2019 Commencement ceremony was a time to celebrate.

Student Commencement speaker Dolores Breedlove, who earned her Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Supervision and Management (BAS-SM), congratulated her fellow classmates on persevering through their studies to graduation.

In her speech, she told her life story and how she overcame the poor choices she made early in life. With the guidance of angels along the way, she got an education, gained self-confidence, and found a job that she loves.

"No matter what obstacles get in the way on your road through life, you must trust in yourself. Many times in my life, I felt like giving up, but the faces of my children, my husband, and my support system helped me to keep moving forward," Breedlove said. "Find something you love and

run after it. The only thing that can stop you is you."

"Choose to follow your dreams and overcome all the barriers of life that include the culture of your family, the choices you make, and the past decisions that will follow you forever. Follow the road to success and that will help guide you to set goals and educate yourself. Never give up on today because tomorrow is guaranteed to be better than yesterday," she added.

Breedlove was given a standing ovation.

Early in the program, the graduates received congratulations and words of wisdom from Dr. Thomas Leitzel, SFSC president.

He referred to the College's Get Connected enrollment campaign.

"Stay connected and promote the connections you made here with others so, together, we build a better community and a better world. Now go forth and connect with those million dreams as they become a reality due to your ingenuity and determination,"

Leitzel said.

More than 325 students met SFSC December graduation requirements by Commencement.

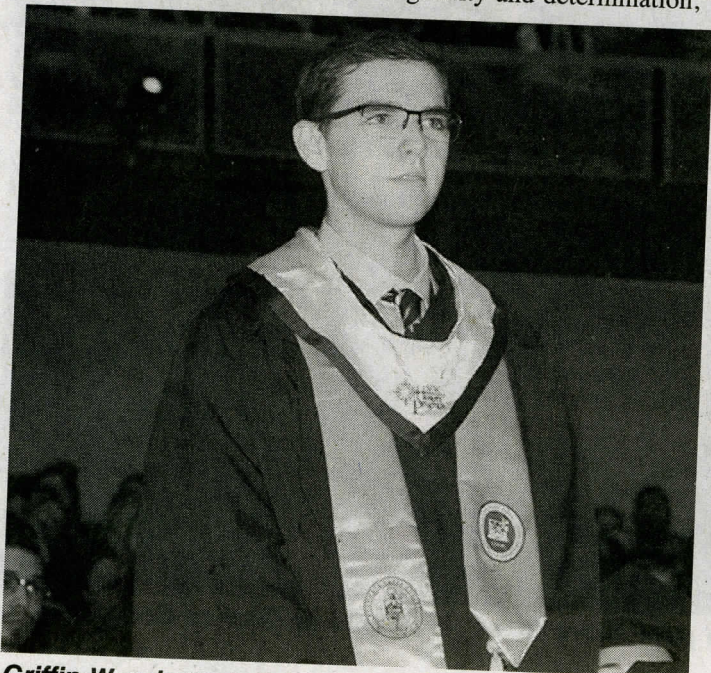
Of these, 21 received their Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management, one received a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, one received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, 104 received their Associate in Arts degree, 12 received their Associate in Science degree, 63 received their State of Florida High School Diploma, and 134 received Career Certificates, College Credit Certificates, or Advanced Technical Diplomas.

Students participating in the Commencement ceremony totaled 208.

Speaking on behalf of the SFSC District Board of Trustees, vice chair Joe Wright, addressed the new graduates.

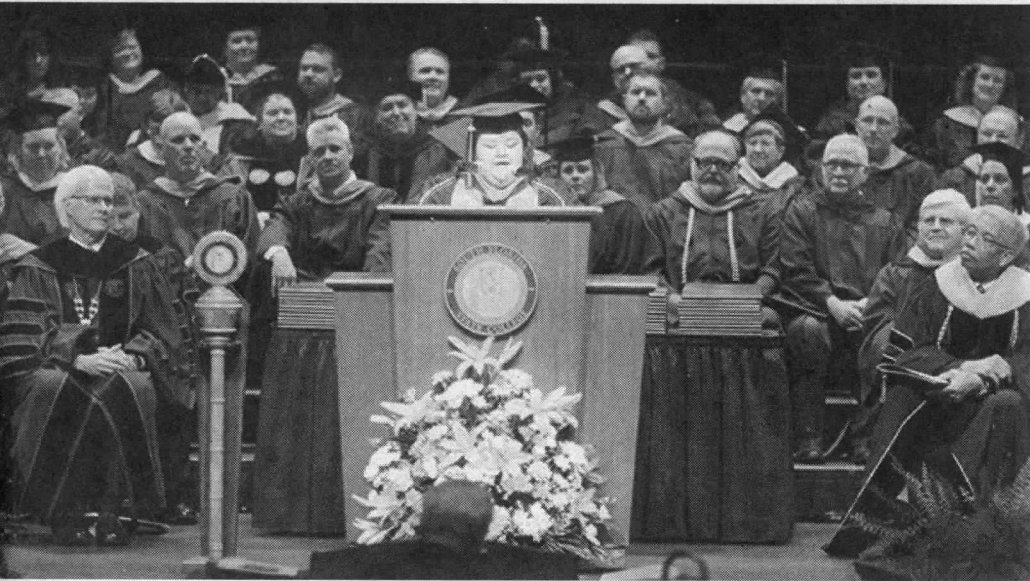
"Life can be rough and tumble from time to time," Wright said. "Each of us has a need to feel accepted, to feel wanted, to feel that people care about us. Please remember that we always wanted you here at SFSC. We, collectively, have been pulling for you and are celebrating with you. We have been looking forward to your graduation from the time you first set foot on one of our campuses. Lastly, keep in touch with us after graduation. We want to claim you, and we want you to claim us as part of your extended family at SFSC."

Mace bearer and chief marshal for this year's ceremony was Thomas Bush, Faculty Council president. Faculty and staff selected to serve as marshals were Elizabeth Andrews, Junior Gray, Courtney Green, Robert Hampton, Dr. Theresa James, Cynthia Kinser, Garrett Lee, Michelle Macbeth, Claire Miller, Tasha Morales, Asena Mott, and Ricardo Pantoja.



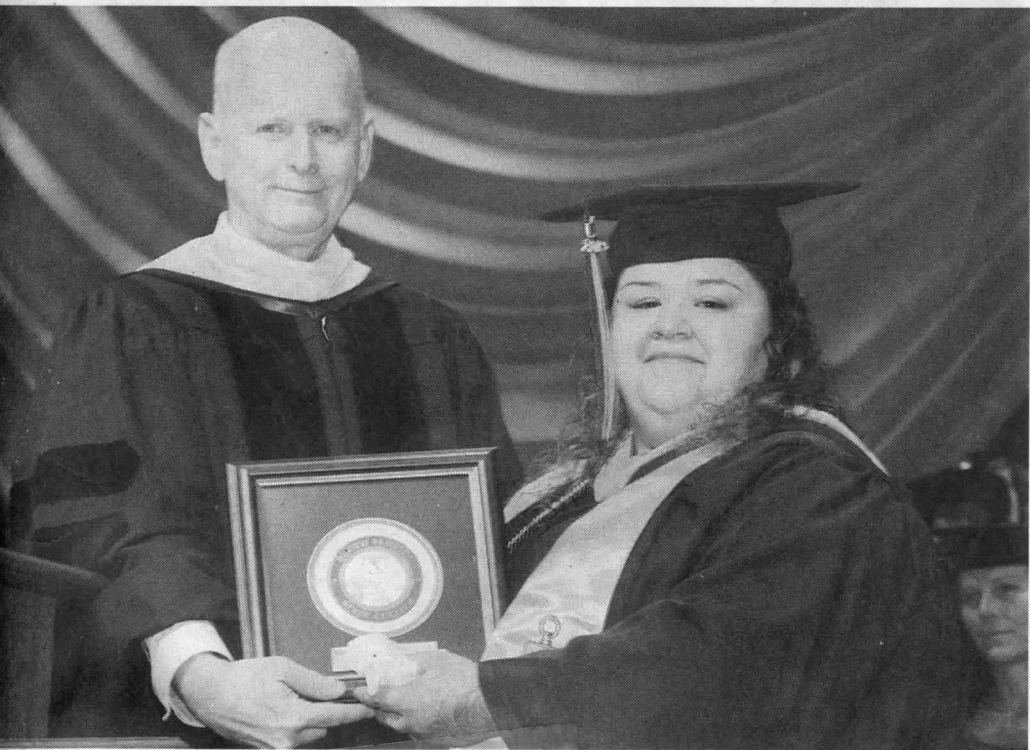
Griffin Woods was recognized as an Honors Program graduate.

# Graduate Commencement



COURTESY PHOTO

**Dolores Breedlove speaking to the graduates.**



**Dr. Timothy Wise (left) presents student Commencement speaker, Dolores Breedlove, with a plaque of appreciation.**

