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BridgeValley Community and Technical College Foundation welcomed over 100 to the Inaugural Bridging the Success Celebration to honor retiring President Dr. Jo Harris.

South Charleston, W. Va. — Over 100 people attended the Bridging the Success Celebration to honor retiring president Dr. Jo Harris who was presented the Distinguished West Virginian Award. Brian Aluise, Regional Representative for Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, delivered remarks from Governor presented Harris with her award during this annual fundraiser for the BridgeValley Foundation.

“Jo has been a tremendous partner as we have worked to enhance our community and technical college programs and better align them with needs of our state’s employers,” Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said. “I truly appreciate her tireless efforts to serve our state’s students and wish her well in her future endeavors.”

Harris has led the college for 12 years, first navigating the creation of an independent institution followed by the consolidation of Bridgemont and Kanawha Valley Community and Technical Colleges into BridgeValley, a multi-campus college with sites in Montgomery and South Charleston.

“Dr. Harris has been a transformational leader when it comes to the relationship between industry and higher education in West Virginia,” said Dr. Sarah Tucker, Chancellor of the Community and Technical College System of West Virginia. “The success of BridgeValley’s partnership with Toyota Motor Manufacturing to deliver the Advanced Manufacturing program has not only created a statewide model for how education and industry can work together to support economic development, but also made it possible for students to complete their college degree without student loans and obtain high-paying careers at home. Personally, Dr. Harris has been a terrific mentor and friend to whom I am indebted.”

Harris oversaw the opening of the 55,000 square-foot Advanced Technology Center of South Central West Virginia (ATC) located on the college’s South Charleston campus. This facility provides a state-of the-art training facility for customized workforce development. Last year, BridgeValley and Toyota Motor Manufacturing announced the naming of Toyota Hall, now the academic hall designation for the ATC, in recognition of Toyota’s investment of over \$1 million to support the continued development of manufacturing education at BridgeValley.

“It has been an honor to be a part of the transformation of higher education in West Virginia as the community and technical college system was formed. Our unique

mission of providing quality technical and transfer programs as well as customized training for business and industry partners has provided valuable educational opportunities to our citizens, many of whom never thought a college degree was a reality for them. They are receiving an education that creates a better life for themselves, their family, and our state.”

The BridgeValley Community and Technical College Board of Governors endorsed Dr. Eunice Bellinger in May and the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education approved her contract on June 16th. Bellinger will begin serving as BridgeValley’s President on July 6th.

Bellinger has a Ph.D. in the Sociology of Education and an Ed.M. in Counseling Psychology from SUNY/Buffalo, as well as a B.S. in Personnel Management from Niagara University. She demonstrated a broad range of experience, including international, and has held upper level administrative positions at Niagara County Community College, Genesee Community College, Massachusetts Bay Community College, Empire State College and Abu Dhabi University. She also has nearly 23 years of teaching experience holding the rank of Professor of Social Sciences.

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