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## More than just a caretaker

**HIGHER EDUCATION:**  
Monroe Community  
College interim President  
Larry W. Tyree has a  
lengthy background in  
higher education.

By DAN GOLDMAN

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When students and faculty at Monroe Community

College meet interim President Larry W. Tyree, they usually pick up on the fact that he's not from around here. His accent gives him away every time.

Tyree, 64, is native to the Pensacola area of Florida, but his accent doesn't sound entirely Floridian. It's a mix of Florida, Kansas, Kentucky and maybe even a little bit

Texas.

It tells the story of his career. In 32 years he has worked in several states across the country.

He retired as president of Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, Fla., in 2001. In the seven years since he has served as interim president at four different community colleges.

"With all these interims, nothing was planned," Tyree said. "It wasn't the result of some agency or head-hunting firm. They just happened."

MCC is the fourth interim position Tyree has filled, following Jefferson Community College in Louisville, Ky.; Johnson County Community



DAN GOLDMAN/MESSENGER POST

Monroe Community College interim President Larry W. Tyree is at his fourth different college as an interim president.

See TYREE, 8A

From Page 1A

College in Overland Park, Kan.; and Independence Community College in Independence, Kan.

After the MCC Board of Trustees failed to select a replacement for President R. Thomas Flynn earlier this year, Tyree got a call to gauge his interest on the interim position.

"I had known [former MCC president] Pete Spina and Tom Flynn and I'd known of this college for about 20 years, having been here twice on visits," Tyree said. "It didn't take me any time at all to know I wanted to come here."

Tyree and his wife, Donna, moved from Sarasota, Fla. to Webster in August and worked with Flynn for two weeks to ease the transition to a new school and community.

Despite a big difference in climate, he likes his temporary home.

"This has been such an embracing, welcoming place," Tyree said. "My wife and I both feel that we've lived here forever. We've just been so welcomed."

Tension at the college was obvious during the original presidential search, but Tyree said he has experienced none of that.

"This is the third institution of this size that I've been an interim at and every one is different in terms of issues," he said. "I'll tell you, this is the most problem-free institution that I've been fortunate to do an interim."

Tyree said his focus is "the tactical stuff, the daily stuff." He's leaving "the strategic stuff" to the next president.

Tyree has also taken on work with the search for the next full-time president.

"It's not in my job description, but then again I don't have a job description," he said.

Having been involved with seven searches over his career, he said he has a lot of experience and knowledge to offer the search committee.

Janet Glocker, the college's vice president of academic services, had worked under both Flynn and Spina. She said she's impressed with Tyree so far.

"When I go to him with a situation, he has actually seen that situation before at different schools," she said. "Different people, different titles, but he has a wealth of experience to draw on."

Tyree said if all goes as planned, a new president will be in place by July 1 of next year.

In the past he has found it tough to leave the interim position.

"It is tough. You get attached," he said. "You can't be in a place for nine months or a year without developing some bonds or attachments. Then when you all of the sudden have to leave those people it's a bit sad."

### Larry W. Tyree's résumé

Interim president at  
Monroe Community  
College, September 2008 to present

Interim president at Independence  
Community College, Independence,  
Kan., November 2007  
to May 2008

Interim president at Johnson  
County Community College, Overland  
Park, Kan., July 2006 to June  
2007

Professor and director of the Institute  
of Higher Education, University of  
Florida, Gainesville,  
August 2002 to May 2006

Executive director at the National  
Alliance of Community and Technical  
Colleges, June 2002 to May  
2005

Interim president at Jefferson  
Community College, Louisville, Ky.,  
January 2002 to July 2002

President at Santa Fe Community  
College, Gainesville, Fla., May  
1990 to December 2001

Chancellor at Dallas County  
Community College District, Dallas,  
Texas, February 1988 to March  
1990

President at Gulf Coast Community  
College, Panama City, Fla., July  
1976 to February 1988