

THOMAS W. DERZYPOLSKI
CLASS OF 1972

Thomas W. Derzypolski's career in broadcasting and higher education began early. At 15, he was already on the air as "Tommy Dee" on WTAL in Tallahassee while attending Leon High School. After serving in the U.S. Army as an analyst in Vietnam, he returned home and found a new beginning when Tallahassee Junior College accepted him as a student.

That opportunity launched an academic journey that culminated in a master's degree from Florida State University and a career dedicated to teaching, communications, and the community college mission. Derzypolski helped build and manage Florida A&M University's first radio station, taught FCC broadcast courses, and later served as an assistant professor of communications at Marshall University and the University of South Florida. He is professor emeritus at St. Petersburg College, where he taught ethics. He continues to credit TJC with opening doors to self-confidence and academic success, and his life's work reflects the enduring impact of community college education.