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TOP STORY

Higher Education

## Renowned journalist, VC alumnus speaks about time in Victoria (w/video)

By Amber Aldaco | [aaldaco@vicad.com](mailto:aaldaco@vicad.com) Apr 2, 2019 Updated 5 hrs ago



Jim Lehrer sees a newly installed plaque recognizing him for his accomplishments as a journalist and alumnus of Victoria College. The plaque was unveiled in downtown Victoria at the site of the former bus station where he once worked.

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Jim Lehrer has spent hundreds of hours as a television anchor and has written more than a dozen novels, but there is a line of dialogue he has never forgotten.

“Last call for Continental Trailways ... Now leaving from lane one next to the building, for Inez, Edna, Ganado, Louise, El Campo, Pierce, Wharton, Beasley, Rosenberg, Richmond, Sugar Land, Stafford, Missouri City and Houston ... All aboard! Don’t forget your baggage, please.”

Lehrer, the award-winning, longtime former anchor of PBS NewsHour, novelist and Victoria College alumnus [returned to Victoria](#) to help Victoria College kick off “Celebrate the Journey” events Tuesday at the Museum of the Coastal Bend and to host a lecture at the Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts.

Lehrer, 84, started Tuesday as the guest speaker of the grand opening of the Museum of the Coastal Bend’s outdoor exhibit called “The Journey: Victoria College Through the Decades.”

The exhibit, which is sponsored by the Victoria College Foundation, showcases how the college responded to student and community needs and outside influences such as wars, social movements and the economy.

Lehrer said his short time in Victoria has been significant to him in his life. He recalls his first story printed in the college’s student newspaper, The Jolly Roger, about how “student enrollment soars to 300.”

Each person taking classes at the school, Lehrer said, was a serious student, with many in the Crossroads commuting to the campus.

“It was a wonderful place to go to school. Each professor was encouraging and warm,” Lehrer said Tuesday.

His start at Victoria College set off the rest of his education and career, he said. After graduating from Victoria College, Lehrer attended Missouri School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, where he received his bachelor’s degree. He also served in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Lehrer was honored Tuesday evening before the lecture with a plaque commemorating his time in Victoria. The plaque is located at the corner of Goodwin and Main streets, where the Trailways Bus Depot once stood.

During the lecture, Lehrer recalled his time in Victoria, and answered questions from Mike Hummel, a retired VC history professor.

Summer McFarlin, a VC student, attended Lehrer's lecture Tuesday evening. McFarlin, 19, said she found Lehrer's career and history so interesting, and found Lehrer's story inspirational. She is currently enrolled in general studies and plans to study animal science.

"It really shows how people can go to a small college and go out and do big things," McFarlin said.

Hailey Whitaker was also in attendance at the lecture. Whitaker, also a student at Victoria College, said she was impressed with Lehrer's tenacity to move on from a junior college to a successful career.

"It's such a big achievement, what he's done with his life. He went out and did what he needed to do to be successful, and he started at Victoria College," Whitaker, 19, said. "We should all be very proud of him."

Lehrer said he is proud to be an alumnus of a community college, and has been an advocate for junior colleges. He said those thinking of enrolling in school shouldn't brush off community colleges.

Lehrer said he can, at times, be a "reverse snob" and brag to colleagues how he did not attend private universities, but received his education at a small, South Texas college and a state university.

"I didn't get a 'classical' education – I didn't go to a prestige school – but I went to school, and I started at a small college," Lehrer said Tuesday morning. "It was a start, and Victoria College was a great place to start, and I'm living proof of that."

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MORE INFORMATION



## Renowned journalist to kick off VC's 'Celebrate the Journey' events

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### Amber Aldaco

Education Reporter

Amber Aldaco is the education reporter at the Victoria Advocate. She's covered various events in the Crossroads including a zoo rescue, a biker funeral and a state meeting with the governor. She enjoys singing with her significant other.