Dr. Brandon Triplett has been selected by members of the Southeastern Illinois College Mu Psi Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society to join Southeastern’s Distinguished Alumni roster. He is Assistant Member in the Department of Bone Marrow Transplantation & Cellular Therapy at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, and Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center in Memphis, TN.

Triplett grew up in Galatia, IL until his family relocated to Eldorado prior to his sophomore year in high school. He earned his associate’s degree from Southeastern in 1994. While at SIC, Triplett participated in Scholar Bowl, was vice president of the Math & Science Club, and was president of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

“When I reflect on the many people who helped me to get where I am today, SIC teachers make up a significant percentage of those people. I considered more than a couple of my SIC teachers friends and mentors,” said Triplett.

Upon graduating from SIC, Triplett matriculated to Southern Illinois University – Carbondale and graduated Summa Cum Laude in 1996 with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and a specialization in biochemistry. He then attended medical school at St. Louis University School of Medicine and was voted by the graduating class of 2000 as “Most likely to cure a major disease.”

“I have colleagues who trained exclusively at Ivy League schools and their education was not really any different than mine. There are no secrets to education (except you get out what you put in — no matter where you go). The difference comes in the teachers who care about their students and give of their time to us,” said Triplett.

One of those teachers at SIC, chemistry instructor Steve Dotson, said of Triplett, “Brandon was an excellent student who has developed a great career helping children with severe illness. I had high expectations for him, and he has not disappointed! I’m privileged to know him.”

Triplett completed his pediatric residency at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center in St. Louis before training in Pediatric Hematology-Oncology at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital between 2003 and 2006. He then returned to Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center in St. Louis as Assistant Professor in the Division of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology, Department of Pediatrics. There he restarted a Bone Marrow Transplantation clinical service, which had been inactive for 2 years, and was named Medical Director of the St. Louis Cord Blood Bank -- one of the first and largest public cord blood banks in the world.
In 2009 he returned to St. Jude – home to one of the largest pediatric transplant centers in the world – to focus on expertise in transplantation. According to Triplett, they perform approximately 150 transplants per year.

“My area of expertise is the use of alternative donors for transplantation in patients who lack a well-matched related or unrelated donor,” said Triplett. “The goal is that every patient who could benefit from transplantation will have the opportunity for safe and effective transplantation irrespective of available donor type.”

Triplett has developed and currently oversees therapeutic research studies that utilize parents as donors for children with very high risk blood-derived cancers such as leukemia. This has significant implications as parents are only half-matched to their children, given that we get half of our genes from each parent.

“Brandon serves as an example for all our students who aspire to get a great education at SIC and move on to make a wonderful career as well as make substantial contributions to society,” said SIC President Jonah Rice. “We are very proud of him and his accomplishments.”

Married for 17 years, Triplett enjoys spending time with his wife and three sons, including bringing the boys back to southern Illinois to hike in Garden of the Gods, as well as go camping and boating on Rend Lake.

The SIC Distinguished Alumni Award will be presented to Dr. Triplett at the college’s May 9 commencement ceremony, where he will present as key-note speaker. The event begins at 7 p.m. in Joseph Deaton Gymnasium at SIC.