



SUPPORTING THE MISSION OF EL CAMINO COLLEGE

SPRING 2026

# The Sharer Foundation Named as Bernard Osher Philanthropist of the Year

The Network for California Community College Foundations has selected Carol and Kevin Sharer and The Sharer Foundation as the 2025 Bernard Osher Philanthropist of the Year.

This prestigious award recognizes distinguished philanthropic contributions to California Community Colleges and is presented annually by the Network. Andrea Sala, Executive Director of the El Camino College Foundation, nominated The Sharer Foundation for their unwavering support of California community colleges. Carol and Kevin Sharer will be recognized at the El Camino College Foundation’s annual Scholarship Awards Dinner on May 14, 2026.

the California Community Colleges Scholarship Endowment was established—one of the most significant scholarship investments in the system’s history.

Carol and Kevin Sharer are extraordinary philanthropists whose unwavering commitment to community college students has created life-changing opportunities for hundreds of aspiring scholars. The Sharer Foundation, which they founded in 2015, is devoted to philanthropy and supporting community college transfer students who demonstrate exceptional determination,



Carol and Kevin Sharer of The Sharer Foundation

Established in 2009, the award is named after Bernard Osher, a businessman and philanthropist whose historic commitment to community college students transformed student access statewide. In 2008, the Bernard Osher Foundation pledged \$25 million, and along with other gifts totaling \$76 million,

resilience, and potential. The Sharer Foundation Scholarship Program provides financial and programmatic support to exceptional California community college students who have completed their associate’s degrees as they transfer to a University of California or a Cal State University. Each Sharer Scholar receives sustained personal attention, mentoring, and regular check-ins from the Foundation’s team.

**Since its inception, The Sharer Foundation has supported 222 Sharer Scholars, including 182 students in California, and has awarded more than \$5.76 million in funding.**

“Community college students often face the greatest barriers, yet they possess extraordinary grit and capability,” said Kevin Sharer, co-founder of The Sharer Foundation. “By reducing financial concerns and connecting students to resources and support at their universities,

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# El Camino College's Basketball Gymnasium to be Named in Honor of Coach George Stanich



On March 25, Andrea Sala, on behalf of the El Camino College Foundation Board of Directors, presented a recommendation to name the new basketball gymnasium located in the West Gymnasium in honor of former coach and faculty member George Stanich. Stanich led the Warriors men's basketball team from 1955 to 1970 and continued to serve students as a physical education instructor until

his retirement in 1992, concluding a remarkable 37-year career at El Camino College. The ECCCD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the recommendation, and Coach Stanich received the exciting news during a special in-person home visit on April 1.

Coach Stanich's athletic achievements are nothing short of extraordinary. At UCLA, he distinguished himself as one of the most versatile three-sport athletes of his era, competing in basketball, track and field, and baseball. He also made history as the first All-American basketball player under legendary coach John Wooden, marking the beginning of a legacy of excellence that would define the program for decades to come.

Upon graduating from UCLA, Coach Stanich signed with a minor league professional baseball team as a pitcher, continuing his standout athletic career. In 1948, he represented Team USA at the London Olympic Games, where he won a bronze medal in the high jump. Today, he hopes to witness the 2028 Summer Olympics—a milestone that would mark the 80th anniversary of his remarkable bronze medal win.

**El Camino College**

**GEORGE STANICH GYMNASIUM**

In honor of Coach George Stanich  
Beloved coach, educator, mentor, and friend

EL CAMINO COLLEGE  
Head Basketball Coach and Faculty Member  
1955 – 1992

In recognition of 37 years of dedication and educational excellence at El Camino College. For over two decades, he guided the men's basketball team with integrity and passion, leaving a lasting mark on his students -- on the court and in life. This space stands as a tribute to his enduring legacy.

*"Once a Warrior, Always a Warrior"*

Coach Stanich's impact has been recognized through numerous honors, including his induction into the El Camino College Hall of Fame, the UCLA Athletic Hall of Fame, and the California Community College Sports Hall of Fame. To further honor his legacy, the El Camino College Foundation will establish an endowed scholarship in his name, inviting support from family, friends, and the extended El Camino College community. Recipients of this scholarship will be selected for demonstrating the same character, discipline, integrity, leadership, and academic excellence that Coach Stanich instilled in his players and the community. Now at 97 years old, he continues to embody these same qualities of excellence. A ribbon-cutting ceremony to dedicate the gymnasium will take place on June 18.



Coach George Stanich (seated) is elated to hear from Andrea Sala (R) and Heidi Wang (L) that the new basketball gymnasium will be named in his honor.

## Sharer Foundation

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Sharer Scholars can fully engage in their college experience, complete their bachelor's degrees, and have a direct impact on society."

Since its inception, The Sharer Foundation has supported 222 Sharer Scholars, including 182 students in California, and has awarded more than \$5.76 million in funding. Today, the Foundation focuses exclusively on supporting California community college students through partnerships with

El Camino College, Santa Monica College, and UC Berkeley.

"Carol and Kevin Sharer exemplify the very best of transformational philanthropy," said Dr. Brenda Thames, president of El Camino College. "Their investment in our students is deeply personal, intentional, and empowering." The impact of the Sharer Foundation is best reflected in the voices of its students. Ava Leon Schaeffer, a Sharer Scholar at El Camino College, shared, "Earning the Sharer Scholars scholarship means that I will never have to struggle alone on my educational journey."

# 2026 Distinguished Alumni & Gratitude Awards Dinner

Congratulations to this year's Distinguished Alumni: Ashley Danial, Bill Kim, Jerry Marcil, John Sweeney, and Mark Waronek; as well as Gratitude Awardees: Honda (Corporate), and the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce (Community). We appreciated the profound words of Keynote Speaker Dr. Melanie Lundquist, and the generous support of all event sponsors. March 6, 2026, was an inspiring evening, celebrating the accomplishments of all honorees and the lasting value of an El Camino College education.







# Alumni Spotlight: Clay Grant Selected for Kenneth A. Brown Memorial Scholarship



Former El Camino College student, Clay Grant.

Clay Grant was recently selected as the recipient of the Kenneth A. Brown Memorial Scholarship—an honor that celebrates both academic achievement and a commitment to equity in higher education.

Established in memory of Kenneth A. Brown, a distinguished graduate of Morehouse College and a passionate advocate for student access, the scholarship supports El Camino College students who aspire to transfer to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). It reflects Mr. Brown's enduring vision of expanding opportunities and empowering future generations through education.

Clay exemplifies the spirit of this scholarship through a strong record of academic excellence, leadership, and meaningful community service.

His dedication to his studies, coupled with his drive to make a positive impact beyond the classroom, sets him apart as a promising scholar and leader.

As Clay continues his educational journey, this recognition not only honors his achievements to date but also affirms the bright future ahead. His story is a powerful reflection of Kenneth A. Brown's legacy—one that continues to inspire and uplift students pursuing their goals with purpose and determination.

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**Clay exemplifies the spirit of this scholarship through a strong record of academic excellence, leadership, and meaningful community service.**

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# Student Spotlight: Erin Dela Cruz Receives Emmy Nomination at 19

At just 19 years old, El Camino College film major Erin Dela Cruz is already making her mark in the film industry. Alongside co-directors Adira Blades and Angelica Guillén, Dela Cruz earned a 2026 Emmy nomination for Outstanding Short Form Live Action Program for their documentary short, *All You Need is Less*.

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**Dela Cruz earned a 2026 Emmy nomination for Outstanding Short Form Live Action Program for her documentary short, *All You Need is Less*.**

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Created during the Girls Voice For Now program—an initiative of Women's Voices Now—the eight-minute film was written, produced, directed, shot, and edited by the trio over an intensive three-week period. The program, which supports young women ages 14–21 in developing their voices through filmmaking, provided the team with a \$500 stipend to bring their vision to life.

*All You Need is Less* explores the environmental and social impacts of fast fashion in Los Angeles County, highlighting its effects on independent designers, global textile workers, and the planet. The film also emphasizes sustainable alternatives like upcycling, championed by local designers committed to reducing waste.

With this national recognition, Dela Cruz hopes to expand her opportunities in film and continue her academic journey at a University of California campus.



El Camino College student Erin Dela Cruz. Photo by Oriana de Quay, *The Union*.

# Three El Camino Students Named Semifinalists for the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Transfer Scholarship

**JACK KENT COOKE**  
FOUNDATION  
COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

Three El Camino College students were recently named semifinalists for the highly selective 2026 Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. The prestigious national award supports exceptional community college students working to complete their bachelor's degrees in any area of study. The three semifinalists include Yerania Celeste Armira, Yehor Kalmykov, and Kai Navratil, who have demonstrated exceptional academic ability and achievement, leadership, and perseverance. "El Camino's three Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship semifinalists demonstrate how hard work and determination can lead to

success," said El Camino College President Brenda Thames.

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation named 485 community college students as semifinalists for 2026, selected from more than 1,300 applicants representing 224 community colleges across 37 states. The scholarship enables recipients to complete their bachelor's degrees debt-free at any accredited four-year college or university in the United States and provides last-dollar funding of up to \$55,000 per year for two to three years. Access to transfer and career advisement is also offered to students. Recipients will additionally receive internship opportunities, study abroad, and graduate school funding, as well as access to a network of over 3,800 fellow Cooke scholars and alumni. Scholarship finalists will be announced in May.

## Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship Semifinalists

Majoring in political science and studio arts, **Yerania Celeste Armira** plans to pursue a career intersecting public policy, community development, and advocacy with a focus on enhancing equitable access to resources and opportunities. "What I like best about El Camino College is the community I have built and the support programs that helped bring that community together."

As a business major and student worker in ECC's Honors Transfer Program office, **Yehor Kalmykov** noticed that many tasks were done manually, so he created Excel tools with formulas and macros to help organize data and speed up key processes to improve workflow efficiencies. "This experience showed me how I can use my background in business automation to help organizations work more effectively."

**Kai Navratil** is a computer science major who wants to design technology products to help others. As the president of ECC's Computer Science Club and an active member of ASO, "I found so much support and things to do at El Camino, and I want to help others have that as well." Off campus, Kai is a lead software engineer at a company building an AI-powered skincare platform.

# El Camino College's 2026 Athletics Hall of Fame Class Announced

The El Camino College Hall of Fame Committee is pleased to announce the 33rd class of the Athletics Hall of Fame. The 13 individual inductees exemplify what it means to be a member of the Warriors during their time at El Camino College. The inductees span eight sports and more than 40 years of excellence on the field of play, along with meritorious service for the athletics program.

This year's induction ceremony will take place on May 28 on campus in the Gymnasium's Multi-Purpose Room. Tickets for the ECC Athletics Hall of Fame dinner are \$125 per person and can be purchased online at the ECC Warriors Athletics website.

We extend our congratulations to all former student-athletes and to Athletics Counselor Chris Jeffries in recognition of their dedication to Warriors Athletics.

## EL CAMINO WARRIORS ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME 33rd Class | 2026 Hall of Fame Inductees

- Crystal (Lizaola) Acerboni '14** | Track & Field
- Kayla Bibb '18** | Women's Basketball
- Glenn Ervine '81** | Men's Soccer
- Victoria Garcia '15** | Softball
- Keith Gibson '86** | Football
- Dale Hewitt '68** | Football
- Russell Higgins '78** | Track & Field
- Alondra Johnson '86** | Football
- Kelly Lancaster '06** | Aquatics
- Courtney Spainhour '03** | Women's Volleyball
- Samantha Taylor '08** | Women's Volleyball
- Kacy Turner-Thompson '06** | Aquatics
- Chris Jeffries** | Meritorious Service



# JOIN US! MAY 28, 2026

Honoring athletes, coaches, and other distinguished individuals for their outstanding accomplishments in athletics and their generous support of the Athletic program.

**EL CAMINO COLLEGE**  
Athletics Multi-Purpose Room  
Gymnasium 218

Social Hour 5 pm | Dinner 6 pm

**Tickets \$125**

# JOIN THE CONVERSATION

## The Future & Educational Priorities of Our Local Community College



**Join the Conversation** is an ongoing effort to engage our community in shaping the future of El Camino College by gathering feedback on educational priorities, campus needs, and our long-term vision.



### Share Your Feedback

Please participate in the survey.  
We want to hear from you!

[www.elcamino.edu/jtc](http://www.elcamino.edu/jtc)

*Thank you to the hundreds of local residents who already participated in our most recent Community Educational Priorities Survey. Your feedback is essential, and we look forward to continuing this important community conversation about the future of higher education in our region.*

**Stay Informed:** Learn more at [www.elcamino.edu/join-the-conversation](http://www.elcamino.edu/join-the-conversation)