



EL CAMINO COLLEGE FOUNDATION

# Connections

SUPPORTING THE MISSION OF EL CAMINO COLLEGE

SPRING 2022

## 75th Anniversary Gala | Distinguished Alumni & Gratitude Awards Dinner

HONORING DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI & COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

### DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI



**Karin Baker**  
Corporate Social Responsibility,  
American Honda Motor Co., Inc.



**Ian and Marilyn MacLeod**  
Entrepreneurs



**Francisco X. Rivera**  
Sports Broadcaster, Fox  
Sports



**Kirk Rossberg**  
President, Torrance Bakery

El Camino College Foundation honored four exceptional alumni at the 2022 Distinguished Alumni & Gratitude Awards dinner on March 4, 2022 at the Westdrift Manhattan Beach. The gala event also celebrated the 75th anniversary of El Camino College. In addition, one area philanthropist, one regional corporate partner, and one community donor were recognized with the Gratitude Award.

“It was our honor to celebrate El Camino’s 75th anniversary while we recognized the accomplishments of former El Camino College students at the 2022 Distinguished Alumni & Gratitude Awards event,” said El Camino College President Brenda Thames, PhD. “We were also pleased to recognize our supporters with the Gratitude Awards, honoring the invaluable funding from our community.”

This year’s honorees included Karin Baker, American Honda Motor Co., Inc.; Marilyn and Ian MacLeod, entrepreneurs; Kirk Rossberg, president, Torrance Bakery; and Francisco X. Rivera, Sports Broadcaster for Fox Sports.

In addition, this year the El Camino College Foundation honored Mary Haag with the individual Gratitude Award; Northrop Grumman with the corporate Gratitude Award; and the Rotary Club of Manhattan Beach with the community Gratitude Award.

### THANK YOU TO OUR GALA SPONSORS

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### GRATITUDE AWARDS



Mary Haag | Individual



Manhattan Beach  
Rotary | Community



Northrop Grumman  
Corporation | Corporate

# El Camino College CommUnity Walk: “Hate Has No Home Here”

MARCH 26, 2022 | EL CAMINO COLLEGE CAMPUS

On March 26, El Camino College hosted a “CommUnity Walk” around the campus to call awareness against anti-Asian hate speech and crimes in several communities throughout the South Bay. In anticipation of the fall 2022 opening of El Camino’s Student Social Justice Center, as well as to promote continued awareness about incidents of racism and hate crimes within the South Bay area, the public was invited to join a “CommUnity Walk Against Hate” in a peaceful walk through the campus.



Terry joined the group, as did Jennifer LaMarque, representing LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn, and Sirley Cuevas, Lawndale City Councilmember. Speakers also shared personal stories of how they have been impacted by racism and how gathering in solidarity for the CommUnity Walk creates allies for vulnerable communities who live in fear. The group Seniors Fight Back hosted



a free self-defense class following the walk. Pepper spray, safety alarms and whistles were distributed. ECC was honored with the Outstanding Diversity Program Award by the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce at their annual Educate, Celebrate and Elevate Diversity event on April 28.

Unified by the motto, “Hate Has No Home Here,” community members joined El Camino students, faculty and staff, and over 300 participants for a one-mile walk around campus to show public support for diversity, tolerance, and human dignity. El Camino College Superintendent/President Dr. Brenda Thames welcomed community members to campus, and asked attendees to join her in taking a stand against racism and discrimination.

Local elected officials including Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Senator Steven Bradford, Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, and Ara An representing Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly Mitchell participated in the event by speaking and showing their support for the message “Hate Has No Home Here”. El Camino Community College District Board of Trustees members Nilo Michelin, Kenneth Brown, Cliff Numark and Trisha Murakawa were also present. Torrance Mayor Patrick Furey and his wife



## Student Spotlight: El Camino College STEM Students Launch Startup

NASA program helps students explore entrepreneurial opportunities using science expertise

A group of El Camino College STEM students is embracing the challenge of getting a new business off and running, while also pursuing degrees in engineering. Their specialized startup received initial funding from a \$5,000 grant awarded earlier this year from the NASA Minority University Research & Education Project (MUREP) Innovation & Tech Transfer Idea Competition (MITTIC). They managed to juggle their busy schedules to create a presentation for NASA executives and potential investors earlier this year.



*El Camino engineering students get ready to launch their business with support from NASA. From left, Noe Servellon, electrical engineering, El Camino, chief technology officer; Alexander Lopez, mechanical engineering, CSU Los Angeles, chief financial officer; Mohammad Pasta, civil engineering, UC Berkeley, chief executive officer; Moises Santander, electrical engineering, El Camino, chief operating officer; and Faizan Darsot, mechanical engineering, University of Michigan, chief product officer.*

“It is a bit difficult but it’s well worth it,” said Noe Servellon, an El Camino electrical engineering major. “A lot of our core work gets done during weekends, post-exam weeks, holidays, and wherever else we can squeeze in an extra hour.”

The El Camino team drafted a 14-page concept paper for a 3D printing business and was selected as one of eight finalists to present at a Space Tank virtual immersion experience at NASA Johnson Space Center. Designed as a “Shark Tank”-style competition, students pitched their idea to NASA engineers, and then finalists were selected based on innovation and creativity.

The El Camino College team competed against top university teams and was awarded \$5,000 to launch their business.

The team has since formed a partnership with Virginia Tech University through the Tech Center Research Park Accelerator Network Program, which led to an all-expenses paid trip to Virginia where the students gained entrepreneurial training as they continued to develop the product.

“My team and I put the work in, from working in different time zones to accommodating everyone’s personal and academic schedule; we have all found a way get things done,” said Moises Santander, an El Camino electrical engineering major.

# Thank You to All Our Gala Honorees, Sponsors and Attendees!

MARCH 4, 2022 | WESTDRIFT MANHATTAN BEACH









## Alumni Spotlight: Dennis Mangers, Class of '59

Dennis Mangers has had a long history in Sacramento as an Assembly member, political adviser and lobbyist. He was recognized as an El Camino College Distinguished Alumni 25 years ago with the "Original 50" Distinguished Alumni.

After attending El Camino, he graduated from California State University, Long Beach, and then received his master's degree in Educational Administration from the University of Southern California. Mangers began his career as a teacher and principal. He served in the Assembly from 1976 to 1980, representing the 73rd Orange County district as a Democrat. He has two adult children and two grandchildren. He is married to Michael Sestak.



Mangers and ECC Dean of Men, Hamilton Maddaford.

### This is his story:

*My father gave a party for Linda and me when I was elected Student Body President and she had been named Homecoming Queen. The next morning, he died of a sudden heart attack in our driveway at just 44 years of age. We were living in a little two room house dad had built for us in Lawndale and we were left almost penniless.*

*I was determined to drop out of school to*

*get a job to help support my mom and two brothers, but then El Camino President, Dr. Stuart Marsee and his wife Audrey, heard about dad's passing and called my mom and me in for a chat. The upshot was that they insisted I not drop out and proceeded to help me get part-time work that enabled me to finish my AA at El Camino and to move onto Cal State Long Beach for a BA*



"Empress" Linda Patterson with "Emperor" Dennis Mangers.



Dean Maddaford, Mangers, a member of the student council, Mangers' late wife, Linda (Axenty) Mangers, Dean of Women Henrietta (Hank) Martin, and Director of Student Activities, William (Bill) Davies.



Mangers, a member of the California State Legislature, was ECC Commencement Speaker in June, 1979.



Mangers and fellow legislators meeting with ECC students on their then annual visit to the capitol as they pledged to seek additional funding for community colleges.

*and USC for my Masters. No one in my family history had ever gone to college but starting my attempt at a California Community College and specifically El Camino, turned out to be the recipe for my successful and happy life. Now, my grandson is an eighth-grade history teacher who followed grandpa to community college and*

*Cal State Long Beach and my granddaughter graduated from Cal and Notre Dame Law School and is an attorney with Gibson Dunn. The California dream continues.*

*We're not super rich, but that's why I still participate in the Foundation's work to the extent I do so that others whose circumstances are as challenging as mine were, have the same opportunity to discover and realize their potential.*

## Annual Cherry Blossom Festival Back in Full Bloom



El Camino College's 22nd Annual Cherry Blossom Festival took place on March 31. The Cherry Blossom Festival has become a festive college tradition that brings the college and community together, while celebrating spring and international friendship. At the event, El Camino students from professor Rhea Lewitzki's creative writing class shared their original haiku poetry and professional taiko drum group, Muj Dream Flight, performed. Traditional Japanese refreshments were served to celebrate the festivities.

The Dr. Nadine Ishitani Hata Memorial Cherry Blossom Festival honors the college's former Vice President of Academic Affairs, who passed away in 2005. Dr. Hata was an internationally known scholar devoted to academia and community work. She was instrumental in bringing the cherry trees to campus 22 years ago, one of the many programs she supported during her 34-year career at El Camino College. American Honda Motor Co., Inc. donated the cherry trees in 2005 and generously contributed to an endowed scholarship in Dr. Hata's name.

"This wonderful El Camino tradition gives us an opportunity to honor Dr. Hata's 34-year career at the college, where she supported many programs designed to help students succeed," said El Camino College President Brenda Thames. "We also recognize American Honda as our dedicated community partner through the years."

This year, the festival included a plaque dedication ceremony to honor both Dr. Hata and American Honda. A longtime supporter of El Camino's academic programs, American Honda assists ECC students through scholarships, Onizuka Space Science Day, and the South Bay Promise. The plaque was placed among the cherry trees as a permanent part of the landscape.

# No Debate: El Camino's Forensic Team is Great!

In March 2022, eight El Camino College students competed at the National Parliamentary Debate Association Championship Tournament (NPDA). At NPDA, El Camino College was the only community college competing against schools such as UC Berkeley, Rice University, San Diego State University, and the University of Oregon.

El Camino earned many top honors, including four first place finishes in the Season Long Sweepstakes category, for accumulating the most points at tournaments throughout the season. These included Overall (2 & 4-Years), Two-Year Division, Novice Division (2 & 4-Years) and Junior Division (2 & 4-Years). In the Tournament Sweepstakes, El Camino was awarded First Place in the Two-Year Division, for the school

who accumulated the most points at the tournament.

Additionally, six El Camino students competed at the prestigious National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence. Like NPDA, this tournament is against other four-year colleges and universities. However, participation in this tournament is by invitation-only, based on points earned throughout the season. Two of the El Camino College teams advanced to elimination rounds with one of the teams finishing the year as the top community college debate partnership in the nation!

Finally, this year for the first time in El Camino College's history, the forensics team won the overall Phi Rho Pi National Championship in St. Charles, Missouri. Congratulations to our amazing Forensics Team for all their success!



*El Camino Forensics team displaying all their awards at the Phi Rho Pi National Championship in St. Charles, MO. Top (left to right): Brittany Hubble (Coach), Kate Gil, Cody Hagemeyer, David Rekart, Josiah Edwards, Jared Hipsher, Sheriff Abdrahman, Safy Tesafay, and Francesca Bishop (Director). Bottom: Jana Abulaban, Uzair Pasta, Sophia Dornberg, Olivia Penland, and Will Brandt.*

**SAVE THE DATE**

**JUNE 2, 2022**

El Camino College  
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

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

**EL CAMINO COLLEGE**  
Athletic Multi-Purpose Room  
Doors open at 5 pm

**2022 ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES**

- Rukayah Bent-Mikal '12 | Track
- Candy Carrico '90 | Softball
- Casey Clark '99 | Baseball
- Ed Eno '69 | Football
- Damon Lee '87 | Track
- John Norris '69 | Wrestling
- Robyn Queen '82 | Volleyball, Soccer
- Shane Redman '78 | Football
- Marcel Reece '05 | Football
- Russell Shaw '05 | Football
- Ken Stills '82 | Football
- Shiloh Talanoa '00 | Softball

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