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Fourth in a series - from El Camino College's 65 years of student success.

El Camino College Celebrates 65 Years of Serving the South Bay; Alumni Success: 1980s

For the past 65 years, El Camino College has been a mainstay in the South Bay, offering outstanding educational and support services for students working to reach their goals. For many, El Camino College serves as a bridge to continue their path through higher education. Others find the training programs they need for high-paying jobs. ECC alumni continue to be successful in their careers and community endeavors.

Through the 1980s, the college focused on serving students through support programs designed to help them reach their goals. In 1982, Rafael Cortada became the third college president and established the El Camino College Foundation in 1983, with a mission to support student success by raising funds and developing community relationships. The ECC Foundation raises funds that provide financial assistance for students through scholarships, textbooks and other programs. More than \$600,000 in scholarships will be distributed in amounts from \$500 to \$4,000 throughout the current academic year to about 425 outstanding students.

The Honors Transfer Program (HTP) was also initiated in the early '80s, offering highly motivated students assistance to transfer successfully to a university and complete a bachelor's degree. HTP students receive priority registration, priority admission consideration for select universities, and honors courses with smaller class sizes.

Sam Schauerman led the college to increased academic excellence when he became the college's fourth president in 1987. Project Success was established that same year to help at-risk students succeed and transfer to a four-year college or university.

Gerard Robinson is one Project Success alumnus who admits he was not a serious student when came to El Camino College in the mid-'80s. After meeting the ECC dean of instruction while working at his grocery store job, Robinson decided to take charge of his future. He turned lackluster grades into A's, transferred to Howard University for his bachelor's degree, and continued to Harvard University where he earned a master's degree in education. He most recently served as the Florida Commissioner of Education.

"I always say that all this would not be possible without El Camino College," he said.

Robinson is one of thousands of students who started their higher education endeavors at El Camino College, leading the way to successful careers in the South Bay and beyond. Students have access to a high-quality, affordable education to transfer to a university or gain employment in areas such as nursing, firefighting and other first-responder and health care positions.

For more information about El Camino College's academic programs and support services, please contact 1-800-ELCAMINO or go to www.elcamino.edu.

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