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El Camino College | Public Relations & Marketing Department
16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, CA 90506
Contact: Ann M. Garten, Director, Community Relations
Telephone: (310) 660-3406 | E-Mail: agarten@elcamino.edu

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Image attached.

El Camino College Honors Nine “Women of Distinction”

Nine successful women were recently honored at the 2014 ECC Women of Distinction Ceremony. Honorees were recognized for their dedicated service and contributions to the community: Anita Avrick, of Redondo Beach; Terry Castillo, of Rancho Palos Verdes; Kristie Daniel-DiGregorio, of ECC; Natalie Gouché, of Inglewood; Dorothy Jeszenka, of Torrance; Rosalinda Martinez, of Hawthorne; Carol Raines-Brown, of Inglewood; Lori Suekawa, of ECC; and Jacquie Thompson of ECC.

Nominated by friends, family and colleagues, award winners were selected by the ECC Women’s History Month Committee, based on service in the areas of professional accomplishments; leadership and/or mentorship; and social, educational, or health services. All honorees must live or work within the El Camino Community College District.

The accomplishments of these award winners will be featured on the El Camino College Women’s Wall of Fame (in the Schauerman Library) throughout the year and their names will be engraved on a plaque that is a permanent part of the display.

ECC Women of Distinction 2014 Profiles

Redondo Beach resident **Anita Avrick** is an active member of her community, and serves on the board of the Redondo Beach Unified School District. She was named the district’s Educational Advocate of the Year in 2010 and also serves as president of the 33rd PTA District, which includes South Bay schools. She has degrees in business and law, and worked as a TV stage manager for 30 years. Avrick also held leadership positions with the Director’s Guild. In 2002, she received the Directors Guild of America’s Franklin J. Schaffner Achievement Award in recognition of service to the industry and to the DGA.

Rancho Palos Verdes resident **Terry Castillo** is a lead teacher at the Southern California Regional Occupation Center (SCROC) in Torrance, where she has taught for many years. Castillo has mentored numerous students, and many of them continue on to El Camino College to further their education. Castillo teaches in the medical assisting area. In her goal to see students succeed and excel, she also serves as a role model for high school and adult students. She is a longtime supporter of education and educational activities in the South Bay.

Kristie Daniel-DiGregorio is a professor in the Behavioral and Social Sciences Division at El Camino College. She is active in ECC student success programs such as EOPS, First Year Experience, Puente, and Project Success, and has served on numerous division and campus committees to incorporate effective teaching and learning strategies across the curriculum. Daniel-DiGregorio spearheaded an On Course Task Force and initiated the Faculty Inquiry Partnership Program (FIPP) at both ECC and ECC Compton Center. In 2010, she received the ECC Distinguished Faculty Award.

Natalie Gouché is a social media marketing trainer based out of Los Angeles. Natalie started her career in

social media as a small business owner looking to expand her global reach. She used social media to attract customers, grow sales in her health business, and brand her name. In less than six months, Gouché was able to quit her corporate job and create L.A. Social Media Trainer Inc. to teach and empower others to use social media marketing to grow their businesses. She can be found around Los Angeles training, speaking, and teaching, as well as on webinars for her international clients.

Since 1989, Torrance resident **Dorothy Jeszenka** has owned and managed Akai Swim School, a Torrance landmark where generations of children have learned to swim and be safe in the water. When not at work, Jeszenka is active in her church, where she has performed various roles such as newsletter editor, youth mentor, and usher. She continually donates resources for church functions, and generously offers to host church parties at the swim school at no charge. Jeszenka balances it all: running a business, being a wife, managing church activities, running a household, and providing loving care to her 89-year-old mother.

For more than 25 years, **Rosalinda Martinez** has served the people of Hawthorne, initially as a records clerk at the police department and then as administrative staff for the city manager and city council. As Community Liaison Officer, Martinez has participated in senior citizen programs, school districts, the Hawthorne-Lawndale Ministerial Association, various cultural festivals, and a myriad of philanthropic projects that have benefited hundreds of underprivileged families, as well as families in crisis. She has volunteered thousands of hours supporting organizations that provide critical services and programs, and has worked tirelessly to make city hall part of the community.

Carol Raines-Brown is a talented vocalist who has been featured at many area activities, including the Endeavor Space Shuttle Ceremony in Inglewood. This wife, mother of eight, and grandmother is a community activist known for her leadership in many service projects. She runs her own foundation, through which she sponsors a college readiness and career day for youngsters. She has also served as youth pastor at Academy Cathedral, and as a board member for Inglewood schools, National Dropout Prevention Center Network, LA County School Trustees Association, National Council on Educating Black Children, and the Inglewood Area Airport Chamber of Commerce.

Lori Suekawa is the articulation officer for ECC, where she is instrumental in supplying critical academic information to faculty, staff, and students. She serves as a reference for faculty and academic deans when developing new courses, changing existing courses, or redesigning degree programs. She also develops transfer major guide sheets that make it easy for students to know what courses are required for various universities, and conducts transfer workshops for students. Suekawa has worked on many statewide projects, served on the College Curriculum Committee for many years, and currently serves on the Academic Senate Educational Policies Committee.

After transferring from ECC and earning advanced degrees at Cal State Long Beach, **Jacque Thompson** tackled the professional world as assistant director at CCH CompuTax, Inc., and managing the offices of the South Bay Children's Health Center. Thompson then returned to ECC as CIS faculty where she has mentored new faculty, created new courses, and adapted existing courses to fit ever-changing legislative and real-world requirements. Thompson has also served as: youth director at Crenshaw Christian Church, PTA volunteer, classroom aide, and Girl Scout Leader. She also serves on area and regional education-based task forces and consortiums.

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Photo Cutline for 2014 ECC Women of Distinction

The 2014 El Camino College Women of Distinction were recently honored for their contributions to the community. Honorees include (from back left): Carol Raines-Brown, Kristie Daniel-DiGregorio, Lori Suekawa, Natalie Gouché, and Rosalinda Martinez. (Front row, from left): Terry Castillo, Jacque Thompson, Anita Avrick, and Dorothy Jeszenka.

Image attached.