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**For Immediate Release**

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## **El Camino College Alumnus and Internationally Renowned Sculptor to Present Latest Work**

The latest work from El Camino College alumnus and internationally renowned sculptor James T. Russell is a culmination of more than four decades of education, dedication, and inspiration.

A tribute to the possibilities of education, “Boundless Spirit” will be unveiled Feb. 18 in its new permanent home, prominently centered on El Camino College’s main entrance to campus, along Crenshaw Boulevard. The program begins at 3 p.m. The impressive 8-foot-tall work of polished stainless steel is mounted on a 3-foot-high pedestal, truly reflecting the spirit and power of teaching and learning.

“Because I was a student at El Camino College and also taught there for 40 years, I was concerned about creating a sculpture appropriate for the college,” said Russell. “It just had to be special.”

With a 48-year career marked by continual learning, Russell received his first of several degrees at ECC, and has remained close to the South Bay college. He keeps up with friends from his college days, attends events, mentors students, and teaches classes. The master sculptor said that all stages of his career have been an educational experience – even learning from his students. In fact, three of the four assistants who worked on “Boundless Spirit” in his Lomita studio are ECC alumni.

Creating this particular work of art is a kind of a homecoming for Russell, who credits El Camino College for giving him a start in both his academic and art career.

“If it wasn’t for El Camino College, what would I have done? Where would I be?” said Russell, one of 50 Distinguished Alumni honored at the college’s 50th Anniversary in 1997. “El Camino College is a life-changing experience. I’m sure that is true for so many people.”

After graduating from Hawthorne High School, Russell earned an associate degree from El Camino College in 1960. He transferred to California State University, Long Beach, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in drawing and painting, then continued his education at Cal State Long Beach, earning master’s degrees in both sculpture and monumental sculpture.

Among his many awards and honors is a National Endowment of Humanities Grant, which he said was another outstanding learning experience.

His nearly five-decade career has been marked by consistent professional successes with public art programs and private commissions. Russell has created more than 100 state, national, and international commissioned sculptures, from Motorola's headquarters in Beijing to the Bellagio and other hotels in Las Vegas. His highly polished monumental stainless steel sculptures can also be seen in public squares, hospitals, airports, libraries, universities, and corporations, among other places. At El Camino College, he designed the Wall of Honor in Marsee Auditorium, which recognizes donors to the college. He personally created and installed each work of art.

Russell has also taught classes at El Camino College and the Torrance Unified School District. Among his many presentations, he was invited by the Republic of China to speak about aesthetics at the Academy of Arts & Design in Beijing. He has also been a guest lecturer at the J. Paul Getty Institute for Educators. His devotion to his work led to him to establish Californians for Public Art, as well as the National Organization of Citizens for Public Art.

His goal is to create sculptures that are in complete harmony with their environment. By choosing low-maintenance, hand-polished stainless steel as his primary medium, the sleek reflective surfaces mirror their surroundings, seamlessly incorporating the ever-changing topography of the world in which they inhabit. In turn, the visually commanding forms spring forth with energy that blends into a unified form.

Some of his most recent national, state, and civic work can be seen in the "Inspiration" installation commissioned by the City of Lansing Michigan; the "Downey Veterans Memorial," commissioned by the City of Downey; and "Healing Hands" commissioned by Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Harbor City.

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