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**For Immediate Release**

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## **El Camino College Mother/Son Team Return to College, Graduate Together**

Garrick Lawrence Nelson had a pretty good study buddy – his mother.

Garrick and his mom, Sheila Denay Douglas, both Inglewood residents, graduated this past spring from El Camino College. Sheila received an associate degree in child development; Garrick completed his auto collision repair certificate.

Garrick said at first, he and his mother weren't even aware they would graduate together.

"It was just an overwhelming surprise," he said. "It was great to get the opportunity to graduate at the same time."

Sheila said going to school at the same time as her son meant they were able to support each other and commiserate when classes were stressful.

"It was a wonderful thing," she said. "Whatever the situation was, when it came to our education we leaned on each other."

Both credit the staff at El Camino College's Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) with helping them plan out classes to graduate and connect them to resources.

"Going into school, I didn't know how to get this or get that," Garrick said. "But El Camino College has the resources for you."

Sheila, 57, was born in New Jersey and moved to Southern California during elementary school. Garrick graduated in 2008 from Morningside High School in Inglewood. Sheila lives close to campus and enrolled in El Camino College in 2010; her son started soon after. Both were looking to make a change in their life and career path.

Garrick said he's planning to head back to El Camino College to brush up on collision repair, and maybe take classes in brake systems or air conditioning systems. He hopes to work for an auto dealer eventually. He currently works at a package delivery company. Sheila said she hopes to find work with the county one day.

"Going back to school has brought me great strength and a lot of confidence," she said. "I want to get back to work."

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