



NEWS

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*First row: DeDe Hicks, Maureen Ann Reilly, Debbie Turano, Sandra Horwitz
Back row: Chris Jeffries, Darlene Daniels, Amy LaCoe, Teri Kuwahara, Susan Stolovy, Jean McMillan*

El Camino College Honors Ten “Women of Distinction”

Ten successful women were recently honored at the 2015 El Camino College Women of Distinction Ceremony. Honorees were recognized for their dedicated service and contributions to the community and include: Darlene Daniels, DeDe Hicks, Sandra Horwitz, Chris Jeffries, Teri Kuwahara, Amy LaCoe, Jean McMillan, Maureen Ann Reilly, Susan Stolovy, and Debbie Turano.

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.

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ECC Women of Distinction 2015 Profiles

Amy LaCoe has worked with ECC students since 1982, first as a student services adviser. After serving as a counselor for 12 years, she continued her role in the classroom for 20 years – she is the longest serving current human development instructor at ECC. LaCoe’s students follow her lead and have completed more than 1,500 hours of community service. She also was a regional delegate for Founders Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles, where she coordinated the Women’s Group, founded and chaired two groups for transgender women, and established the Christine Daniels Scholarship.

A human resources professional at The Aerospace Corporation, **Darlene Daniels** has been married to husband, Kelly, for 18 years and is a proud mother to son Darius, 16, and daughter Gabby, 11. Darius was born autistic, and Daniels decided early on that Darius would be educated to the very best of his abilities. Darius attends Gardena High School and after school attends Mychal’s Learning Place, an independent living and vocational skills center, where Daniels volunteers. She also helps with Special Olympics (Darius plays basketball), Studio West Gymnastics (where Gabby competes), and Crenshaw Christian Center.

DeDe Hicks has served as the president and CEO of the Volunteer Center in Torrance since 1986. Through her leadership, the center has grown from a small group with a budget of \$136,000 to a non-profit organization with an annual budget of over \$2 million. One project includes Operation Teddy Bear, which provides 5,600 disadvantaged first graders with school supplies and backpacks, complete with a teddy bear. Hicks is actively involved with the Torrance Chamber of Commerce and the League of Women Voters in Palos Verdes, among other groups.

Through her involvement with Lawndale schools and the Lawndale Rotary Club, optometrist **Dr. Sandra Horwitz** has changed the lives of many youngsters. She dedicates her time and expertise to the Vision to Learn program, providing free eye examinations and glasses to Lawndale elementary school students who may not otherwise receive treatment due to lack of health insurance. The program spearheaded by Dr. Horwitz was so successful, the Lawndale district applied for grants to continue the service. A graduate of the UC Berkeley School of Optometry, Dr. Horwitz operates the oldest optometry practice in the city of Lawndale.

Chris Jeffries is a counselor for ECC’s Health Sciences and Athletics Division, as well as co-president of the Academic Senate. She has served as an ECC counselor since 1992 and has also been the vice president of the faculty union, academic senate secretary, Health Sciences and Athletics curriculum committee member, and college curriculum chair. Jeffries has been a leader in the “Scholar Baller” program, which honors athletes with high academic achievement. Many of her former students have gone on to play sports at the Division I, II and professional levels.

Teresa (Teri) Kuwahara is the former director of the College & Career Center at Palos Verdes High School and has spent her career advising South Bay students. Well known in the counseling community, Kuwahara is also a dedicated volunteer. She serves on the board for the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute and was a founding adviser for Adventures in Art, a parent volunteer art program. Kuwahara was also president of the Torrance Sister City Association, where she coordinated efforts to assist residents of the earthquake and tsunami-stricken Tohoku, Japan. She currently is an event planner for WACAC.

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Born in 1928, **Jean McMillan** was inspired early on to pursue her education. After earning a bachelor's degree in honors chemistry from the University of British Columbia and a master's in physical chemistry from USC, McMillan worked as a research chemist for Canadian Atomic Energy and at USC before becoming a faculty member at Immaculate Heart College. While raising five children, McMillan served as Manhattan Beach's City Clerk and was a founding trustee of the South Bay Hospital Foundation. She also served on the board of trustees for the South Bay Hospital District and was an advisory board member of several organizations.

While working full time and attending school, **Maureen Reilly** was also a single parent to her son, two nieces, and two nephews. She earned an associate degree in human services, a bachelor's in sociology and psychology from Cal State Dominguez Hills, and enrolled in a graduate program. In 1998, she became a social worker for DCFS, where she remained until she retired in 2014. She now provides therapy at a small group home, focusing on troubled youth. She has worked relentlessly, in her family and in the community, to encourage youth to become successful, responsible members of society.

Susan Stolovy teaches astronomy and physics at ECC, where she is known for bringing current issues into her classroom and for assisting students in need. Once an astronomer at the University of Arizona, she worked with both the Hubble Space Telescope and the Kuiper Airborne Observatory with her research. As a scientist at Caltech, she researched the center of the galaxy via the Spitzer Infrared Space Telescope and the Hubble Space Telescope. Stolovy has a doctorate and master's degree in physics from Cornell University and a bachelor's degree in physics from Johns Hopkins University.

Debbie Turano has worked at ECC since 1992 and currently serves as senior clerical assistant in the Facilities Department. Turano has been an active member of numerous ECC committees, including the accreditation team and planning summits at both ECC and ECC Compton Center. In 2006, she established the Sergeant Kirk Johnston Memorial Scholarship in honor of her first husband, who had been an ECC police sergeant. Turano currently serves on the college's Foundation board and has held leadership positions within the classified employees' union. Her volunteerism extends to her community where she is an elementary school Reading Partners tutor.

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