



October 2005
Volume 1, Issue 2

Fashionably Speaking

WE FONDLY SAY FAREWELL TO OUR FASHION ADVISOR, CHRISTINA MORAN WISDOM

by Melanie McFarland

Special Interest Articles:

23rd Annual Fashion Show
In The Spotlight
"Words of Wisdom"

Individual Highlights:

Cal Apparel News -	
Enrollment Soars for California's Fashion Design Programs	2
23rd Annual Fashion Show	3
Daily Breeze -	
Fashioning A Career	4
Cal Apparel News -	
Fashion Bound	6
"Words of Wisdom"	8
Misson Statement	8

Affectionately known as "The Wiz," Chris Wisdom has graced the El Camino College campus with her spirit and vigor for over 26 years! Let's go back in time and learn more about her life and what got her interested in fashion.

Chris is a native Los Angeleno. She didn't immediately begin college after high school; she started her adult career at the Aerospace Corporation. Her first job was as mailroom clerk. She met her best friend, Jimmie Jean Williams there and they often spent their evenings out dancing! Chris transferred to the art services department and learned much from her colleagues. During those nine years, the artists became her mentors teaching her lettering, color, and art history. They encouraged Chris to go back to school. She convinced her father to let her go for one semester; if it didn't work she would go back to Aerospace. He suggested she major in home economics, even though she desperately wanted to be an art teacher. Her father, with his art background, insisted that he knew too many female artists who didn't get recognition for their work. So she enrolled at Mount San Antonio College, in Walnut. Her first instructor, Author Phyllis Specht, is still a dear friend. Chris remembers what she wore her first day at college: a self-made blouse, dirndl skirt, and Bermuda socks. She was scared

to death – at least ten years older than the other students. She attended Mt. SAC for 2 1/2 years, and then transferred to Cal State, Long Beach. She received her B.A., in home economics, with a minor in art. She spent an additional fifth year, getting her teaching credential. Her first teaching job was at Hoover Junior High School, in Long Beach for 6 years. She moved to Long Beach and met John Wisdom, who became her husband. He also taught at Hoover Jr. High School, construction & woodshop classes. In 1975, Chris began teaching interior design at Mt. SAC. She and John were married at Wrigley's Memorial, on a hillside on beautiful Catalina Island, that same year. It was a small ceremony with family and friends. Her husband became a contractor and developer, and they had their first child, Bryan, in May of 1977. Meanwhile, she got her masters degree in clothing & textiles, completed in 1979. While finishing her master's degree, her professor, Dr. Joan Lare, convinced Chris to get an application for a fashion position at El Camino College. She passed the first interview easily, but was concerned about the second one. She heard they were worried about her tailoring abilities. So she tailored a three-piece suit in three weeks, and wore it to the interview. Naturally, she got the job! At the time, she was one of three full-time fashion instructors and she taught the advanced students, along with Dr. Karen Robinette, now the chairperson of the fashion department at Cal State Northridge and Dr. Grace Underwood.

In the fall of 1982, second son Danny was 4 months old, and Chris had another challenge besides a new baby. Dean Dr. Jim Walker informed Chris that three of her fashion courses were cancelled because they were not part of program. The state of California mandated all fashion classes be part of the major and/or certificate. Also, the department had to develop an industry advisory, to help the college to meet the industry employment needs. Chris and the other full-time instructors formed the Fashion Advisory Committee (which still meets twice a year!) Her friends were the initial



Dean Way & Mrs. Wisdom during Farewell at the FASHION BOUND 2005 Fashion Show

continued to page 2



WE FONDLY SAY FAREWELL, TO OUR FASHION ADVISOR, CHRISTINA MORAN WISDOM

by Melanie McFarland

continued from page 1

contacts, along with garment and fashion industry professionals. With this early advisory board, they established curriculum guidelines, creating the first fashion degree and certificate programs. The classes were arranged around core studies of design and merchandising. The purpose of the curriculum was to give foundational theory, technical, and creative skills for entry level jobs. The current program offers A.S. degrees in design and merchandising, and certificates in computer aided patternmaking, fashion stylist and costume technician.

When asked if she is satisfied

with her career, Chris mentions how proud she is of the fashion students and of what she is leaving, a legacy! She knows she has given them the skills to get along in life. Chris believes community colleges provide greater value over technical schools. Here the students can complete an education to get a job, eventually buy a home, have a place within an industry and become taxpayers – all viable skills. Living true to her name, Chris doles out “wisdom.” She has many wonderful quotes, such as: “Time is money.” She explains it this way, “at any level, expertise is your net worth, do NOT give it away for free, barter it.” Or, “don’t sell yourself short.” Her inspiration to become a teacher goes back to 6th grade. Ironically, it was an incident with a bad teacher that made her realize she wanted to go

into teaching. She was ridiculed in front of her entire class and vowed to make a difference somehow. One teacher who gave her confidence was Mr. Cornell. He was the first to recognize her as a good student. When she painted a picture of deer in a forest, he had it put in the principal’s office! Perhaps this was an early start to her design career?

Chris Moran Wisdom will not go quietly away. She has many supporters; often they are former students who have gone on to wonderful careers in the garment industry. Chris has become the instructor she sought out: one who coaches, inspires, and cares. She promises to return in September, on a minimal basis, teaching the Intro to Mac classes. It is fitting that her career started and ended with art-based education!

Enrollment Soars for California’s Fashion Design Programs

By Andrew Asch, Retail Editor

Reprinted with permission from California Apparel News, copyright 2005

More than 78 fashion design students graduated from California State University, Long Beach this year, marking a 25 percent rise in program enrollment for the school. While the increase was unprecedented for CSU Long Beach, it was par for the course for many of the state’s design schools, which saw enrollment jump anywhere from 5 percent to 80 percent over the past few years, according to college administrators.

More students are choosing fashion for a myriad of reasons, including the skyrocketing interest in the industry’s glamour, said college administrators.

Fashion design programs are also on a growth spurt because of simple demographic realities. More people are going to college, and the business of education has been on the upswing.

But the boom in fashion education has not been in sync with the economy. Employment in Southern California’s apparel industry has been declining for several years. The number of jobs in Southern California’s fashion industry dropped to 59,600 in 2005 from 66,100 in 2004, according to Jack Kyser, chief economist for the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.

While the job loss is part of a long-term trend caused by the movement of volume production overseas, college administrators and professors said they have responded to this economic challenge by increasingly shaping their curriculum around the needs of the industry.

Tailor Made Student Fashion Club

Meets

1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the Month
12:30p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Technical Arts Building
upper level, Room TA 212
North Side of ECC Campus

Tentative Meeting Dates:
September 6 & 20
October 4 & 18
November 1 & 15
December 6

for more info:
(310) 660-3346
fax (310) 660-3106
eccfashionshow@elcamino.edu
www.elcamino.edu/fashion/tailor_made.html
or come and visit the
Fashion Department in the
Technical Arts Building



FASHION BOUND

Another fashion journey began just after our 2004 show, **RAFA, Reflections, A Fashion Affair**. The date was set, the plans made. Time to “take off” on an adventure in fashion! For the students of the Fashion Show Production Class, it’s a chance to learn by doing. Rarely does student participation reach this level: where students, rather than the instructor, make almost all the decisions. The basics of the class are taught: promotion, publicity & advertising, model call & training, and staging & commentary, then the students take over. They create a theme and logo, design all the promotional material, sell ads, work with student models, get donations, and prepare all the physical elements for the stage. Each year, the show is unique, because the students always bring their individuality and creativity to the class. The 2005 Fashion Show Production class team members were: **Lauren Brown, Celia Bonnello, Miki Furugen, Veronica Lara, Carla Lopez, Naho Matsushita, Matt Paul, Staci Smith, Jackie Suntay and Phuong Tran.**



Fashion Show Production Class, FASHION BOUND 2005

Due to the smaller than average class size this year, the students worked exceptionally well as a team. It’s also a chance for the instructor to work one-on-one with the students, reaching greater potentials.



Miki Furugen, Chris Moran-Wisdom & Celia Bonnello

“I would definitely recommend this class to other students because it gives you a chance to experience what the professional world of fashion is really like. It’s not just developing academic and creative skills, but it also develops your decision-making and leadership skills, and most importantly, how to work effectively with others. If you learn to work well with others, then your tasks are much easier to complete and you will have much more fun doing them.” —Celia Bonnello

Our evening began with the littlest divas: **“Kids Can Sew”** students under instruction from **Orfa Nitkiewicz**. Following this, students from our feeding High Schools: **Narbonne, Redondo, West, Mira Costa and Torrance**, participated in the “Shining Stars” Scholarship competition. **Mira Costa student, Jennifer Gallo, with Carolyn Hylander, instructor, took the prize!**



Jennifer Gallo, Student Designer & Model
Mira Costa High School

We followed this with our annual T-shirt contest, winning entry by Phuong Tran, and our door prize drawing, Erin Young, won a \$500 travel certificate! For the

main show: Fashion Bound, there were four categories and over eighty original designs. Students competed for awards in swimwear, daywear, eveningwear and designer collections. An award was also given for

“Best of Show.” We were fortunate to have our V.I.P. guests including: **Naomi Rodriguez, with Disney Entertainment Costuming; Karen Rivera, formerly**

with Radio City Rockettes; Karen Robinette, Professor and Chairperson of the Fashion Program of Cal State University, Northridge; Ken Key, ECC Fashion Counselor; Frances Harder, Fashion Business Incorporated; and Andrew Asch, California Apparel News. Cable coverage was



Denise Myles, Melanie McFarland, Andrew Asch & Frances Harder

provided by **Mark Doddy of Torrance Cable**. With over five hundred in attendance, the 23rd Annual Spring Fashion Show, “Fashion Bound” was a success by all standards! Thank you to our sponsors and donators, students and guests.

“I am going to definitely recommend the class to other fashion majors, just because of the experience & wonderful knowledge I’ve gained. I truly believe that taking that class is vital for us, because it gives a totally different outlook about the industry as a whole, and gives you the opportunity to explore the many aspects of fashion.” —Lauren Brown



Fashioning A Career

By Sandy Cohen
DAILY BREEZE

The show is produced on a shoe-string budget of about \$4,000. They started with nothin more than a nose for fashion.

project will be "Fashion Bound," the 23rd Annual Fashion Show.

-- and countless hours after school
-- coordinating the program, to be held Friday at Marsee Auditorium on campus.

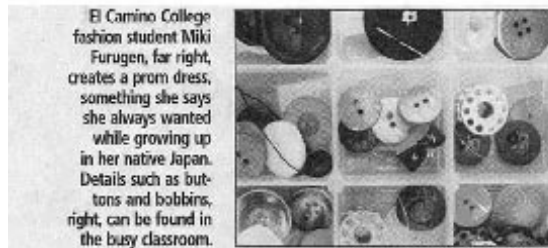
"This is one of the few classes on

But the accomplishment isn't theirs alone. Every piece of clothing in the show is designed and created by students in the school's fashion classes.

"This is our way of merchandising the program," said fashion club president Matthew Paul, 21. "El Camino isn't known to have a fashion department. This is our way of showing the public and the industry that we are a legitimate fashion department."

"The students are talented, the teachers are great and someone can come here and start their career in fashion," he said.

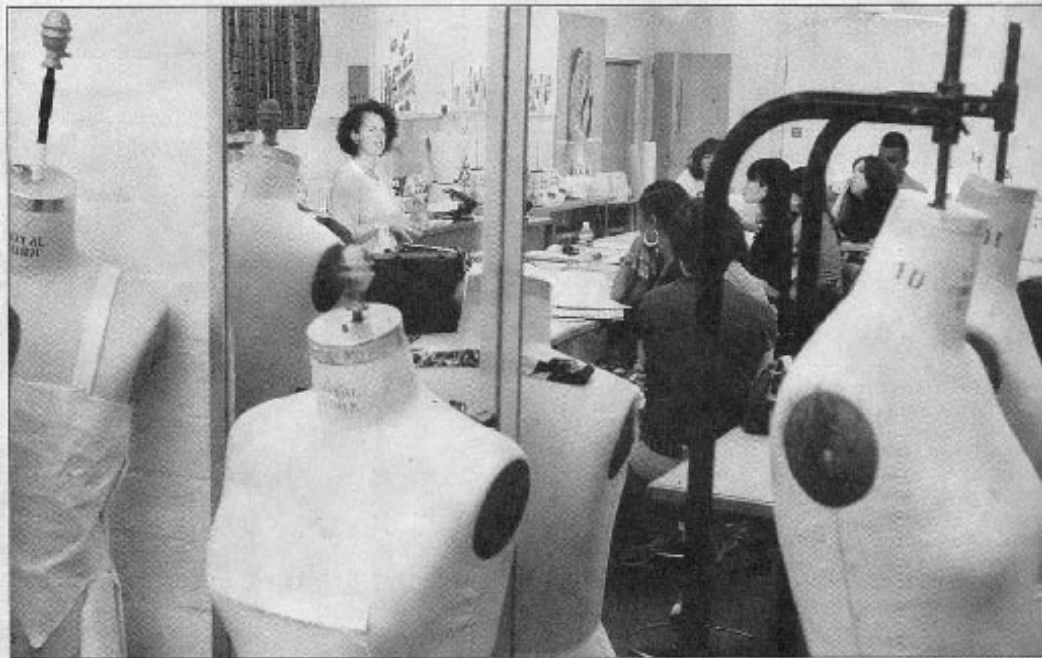
Graduates have gone on to become Disneyland costumers, fashion designers and graphic artists.



BRAD GRAVERSON/DAILY BREEZE



BRAD GRAVERSON/DAILY BREEZE



BRAD GRAVERSON/DAILY BREEZE

"This is one of the few classes on campus where the students get a lot of say," says Melanie McFarland, who teaches the El Camino fashion class.

Sixteen weeks later, they've built a runway, trained two dozen models, collected more than 100 garments created by fellow fashion students and notified designers all over Los Angeles County.

It's all in a semester's work for the students in Melanie McFarland's Fashion Show Production class at El Camino College, where the final

campus where the students get a lot of say," said McFarland, 46, a former designer for Disney and an alumna of El Camino's fashion program. "Everything in the class is done by them. It builds great community and it really builds their confidence."

The 11 students in McFarland's Fashion Show Production class spend about 64 hours of class time

Sixteen weeks to put together a fashion show is "a very short time in the grand scheme of things," McFarland said. Couture show coordinators typically take up to nine months to plan a show, and they know the date two years in advance.

They also work with a budget that nears six figures, according to Chris Moran-Wisdom, head of El Cami-



no's fashion department. The student show relies on a budget of about \$4,000, generated mostly through ticket sales from the previous year's event.

But even with its rush to the stage and shoestring budget, the fashion show is serious business for the students involved.

"The hardest part is to get it from your mind to the paper, then actually making it and finishing it all in time," said Denice Myles, 47, who's contributing four pieces to the show, including the prom dress she designed for her son's girlfriend. "It's exciting to see it come together."

Myles, who is set to graduate in June, designed a line that's all about ruffles -- inspired by the Prince concert at Staples Center last year. "I used to cut up stuff to make Barbie clothes," she said. "Now I want to teach and have my own business on the side."

Paul is contributing to the show a 10-piece collection, which he describes as "traditional, classic pieces with a twist." He wanted to study business after graduating from Gardena High School. But he took a fashion class at El Camino, "just to see if I liked it," and got hooked. This is his second time in the fashion show production class, and the second time he'll see his designs strut down the runway. He graduates in December and hopes to make fashion his ca-

reer. "I want Joan Rivers' job," he said. "I'm also looking into producing fashion shows. I love the process."

"When you see it on the runway, it's glam. But there's so many things that aren't glam, like all the late nights and cigarettes smoked. It's stressful. It's not that glam behind the scenes."

McFarland lets the students run the show and manage the stress. Not that it doesn't bleed over a bit. About two weeks before show time, she starts feeling anxious. "It's like I'm going to vomit every day," she

sewing and a history of late starts. But none of that seems to matter when the students see their work on the runway. "They get so much confidence, and they take it with them going forward," McFarland said. "They realize they can survive in the real world."

Reprinted with permission of Daily Breeze, copyright 2005

Sunday, May 29, 2005

Edition: BRZH Page: B1

www.dailybreeze.com



In preparation for their fashion show, El Camino students design miniature runway sets.

said. "But they get so much out of making all the decisions. In this class, their opinion matters. They have responsibility, and people are counting on them."

There have been some glitches over the years, including last-minute backstage



Fashion Bound

By Andrew Asch, Retail Editor

Who: El Camino College

What: "Fashion Bound," the college's 23rd annual student-design fashion show

When: June 3

Where: The college's Marsee Auditorium, Torrance, Calif.

The Scene: El Camino's annual student fashion show began with a farewell. Chris Moran-Wisdom, who founded the fashion department 26 years ago, announced her retirement as fashion department advisor. She had mentored more than 4,000 students.

Yet Moran-Wisdom said her academic vision will stay strong long after she departs the scene. "These kids are going to have a foundation

in fashion and get a job where they will be able to buy a house and a car," she said.

El Camino's fashion students certainly showed they had that foundation. The small class of 10 students showed 80 looks that ranged from swimwear to eveningwear. New student Aracelli Arriola made a splash by winning the "Best of Show" award.

Even though Arriola just completed her first semester at El Camino, she has spent the past 12 years sewing and supporting herself with a small gown and bridalwear business. She broke from her typical designs to showcase exotic, Indian-inspired casualwear that ranged from halter tops to wrap pants. "I wanted something casual without going to jeans," she said.

Other students honored included Matthew Paul Robinson for Best in

Collections, Vanessa Scouton for Best in Daywear, Miki Furugen for Best in Eveningwear and Maria Munoz for Best in Swimwear. El Camino student Denise Myles also won a scholarship to take seminars at Los Angeles-based Fashion Business Inc., which helps young designers and companies grow their business.

Reprinted with permission from California Apparel News, copyright 2005

Fashion Feature Volume 61, Number 24
Week of June 10-16 2004

www.apparelnews.net



Miki Furugen



Aracelli Arriola



Matthew Robinson



Jackie Suntay



Ellen Collins



Vanessa Scouton



Rachel Gillette



Vanessa Scouton & Marguax Solano



Matthew Robinson

INDUSTRY EXPERTS VISIT ECC By Melanie McFarland

Last Spring, the Fashion Department was fortunate to have visiting experts. Frances Harder dropped in on May 10th. She is the founder and president of the fashion industry non-profit resource center, Fashion Business Incorporated (F.B.I.).

Frances Harder, Guest Speaker



Miranda Selwyn, designer for B.C. and Seychelles Shoes came to class on June 9th. Located in El Segundo, Seychelles has always been a supporter of the annual Spring Fashion show, loaning us shoes for the models and treats for the V.I.P. goodie bags. Frances sits on the ECC Fashion Advisory Board and generously donated an F.B.I. scholarship to one of our graduating students. The students enjoyed



the relaxed atmosphere and could easily approach the speakers. This gives them necessary informa-

tion and renewed confidence and inspiration. We received the latest edition of "Fashion for Profit" book and DVD from Frances, for our classroom library. Miranda inspired us with her career path, her positive attitude and her life philosophy. She told us,

"Stay true to yourself, be grateful, and keep looking for what you want."



Fashionably Speaking

FASHION & RELATED TECHNOLOGIES

ECC Industry & Technology Div.

16007 Crenshaw Boulevard

Torrance, CA 90506

PHONE: (310) 660-3346

FAX: (310) 660-3106

FASHION ADVISOR

Mrs. Melanie McFarland

mmcfarland@elcamino.edu

melbmcfarland@yahoo.com

FASHION DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Mr. Robert Blackshear

rblackshear@elcamino.edu

Ms. Vera Bruce

vbruce@elcamino.edu

Ms. Christine Marriotti

cmarriotti@elcamino.edu

Mrs. Chris Morán-Wisdom

cwisdom@elcamino.edu

Mrs. Shirley Warren

swarren@elcamino.edu

Ms. Carin Jacobs

Ms. Vera Kopecky

TEACHER'S ASSISTANT

Ms. Joyce Joaquin

jjoaquin@elcamino.edu

eccfashionshow@elcamino.edu

FASHION WEBSITE

www.elcamino.edu/fashion

“Words of Wisdom”

Advice from Chris Morán-Wisdom, Fashion Department Chairperson

The quality of Fashion and Related Technology program fills my heart with pride. Our students are employed in the apparel and entertainment industries and each entry-level job gives these new employees the skills to move on to better jobs. Each job provides them with the needed experience and confidence in themselves to move up the job ladder. The fashion discipline offers many career options, such as costumers, designers, patternmakers, production and manufacturer assistants, entrepreneurs, and merchandisers. The students become part of the American fabric turning them into taxpayers, employers and homeowners. Thank you El Camino College for my 26 years, what fun it is seeing the lights turn on in bright sparkling eyes. Building confidence is my passion.

Confucius says: “Find a job you love and you will never work a day in your life.”

Warm Regards

Mrs. Christina Morán-Wisdom

Professor Emeritus

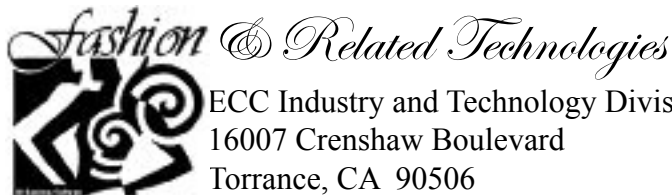


Melanie McFarland & Chris Wisdom

FASHION DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The Fashion Department of El Camino College is embedded within the Industry & Technology Division. Our primary objective is Student Success. We strive to achieve the following goals:

- We aim to exceed the educational needs of students entering the Fashion Department for a “first look around” or as declared Fashion Majors.
- We provide support through campus counseling and networking with industry professionals.
- We encourage teamwork and student awareness of the changing and fast-paced Fashion Industry through the campus club, “Tailor Made.”
- We graduate students ready for entry-level positions within the Fashion Industry Job Market.



The El Camino College District is committed to providing equal employment and educational opportunities for all individuals, regardless of race, color, ancestry, religion, gender, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, physical disability, age, and Vietnam-era status.