



SUPPORTING THE MISSION OF EL CAMINO COLLEGE

SPRING 2025

## Kenneth A. Brown Board Room Named in His Memory

On December 16, 2024, El Camino College celebrated the unveiling of the newly named Kenneth A. Brown Board Room in the Administration Building.



*All smiles for the Brown family as they proudly participate in the Board Room dedication.*

The ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony honored former El Camino Community College District Board of Trustees President and long-time Trustee, Kenneth A. Brown. Brown's family, friends and members of the ECC campus community came together for the ceremony. The milestone commemorates Trustee Brown's legacy of leadership and commitment to student success, equity and innovation. The naming of the Board Room further honors Brown's many years of service to El Camino College, as well as his efforts to advance higher education and community college access across the nation.



*The Men of Morehouse honoring their alumni brother, Kenneth Brown, along with son Kenneth II, who is also an alumnus.*



*Dr. Karla H. Brown officially "cutting" the ribbon in honor of her late husband, along with sons Kenneth II and Kaleb, and the current ECCCD Board of Trustees.*



# Avery Thomas Experiences Early College at El Camino



*(Story paraphrased from The Union article; Two Schools, One Schedule: My Experience as a Dual Enrolled Student by Avery Thomas, published December 11, 2024)*

Avery Thomas is both a full-time student at El Camino College and a junior at North High School in Torrance. She takes college courses in the morning, and heads back to high school in the afternoon.

It all started when Avery was entering her freshman year of high school. She was presented with a unique opportunity to join North High's Early College Program in its inaugural year. Avery said, "The thought of joining a dual enrollment program and taking college classes while starting out high school was scary and loomed over my head as the school year approached. Then, once I actually began the program, it turned out to be the best educational experience I've ever had the pleasure of being a part of."

During her freshman and sophomore years, Avery took El Camino courses taught by North High teachers on her high school campus. Although a culture shock at first, it turned out to be the best way for her to integrate into dual enrollment life. She learned about meeting college deadlines, doing college coursework, and taking college-level midterms. It was a lot more studying, writing, and work than she anticipated, but she knew she was working towards a worthwhile end-goal.

Avery stated, "I've been able to take classes in classrooms at ECC, taught by the college's instructors. This opened up opportunities, including being part of the campus community." However, Avery said the best part about being a dual enrolled

**"Through the program, I am able to earn my high school diploma and my associate's degree at the exact same time. This allows me to have two years of college credit completed once I graduate, ultimately saving me money and shortening my time getting through school once I transfer to a four-year university."**

— Avery Thomas

student isn't even experiencing campus life. It's the outcome and what she's getting out of the program that she loves the most. "Through the program, I am able to earn my high school diploma and my associate's degree at the exact same time. This allows me to have two years of college credit completed once I graduate, ultimately saving me money and shortening my time getting through school once I transfer to a four-year university."

Additionally, the greatest bonus of an early college program is that every class she completes at El Camino, counts for both high school and

college credit. When she eventually transfers, not only will Avery apply as a transfer student (which will increase her chances of getting accepted), but she won't need to complete all the general education classes that other college freshmen are required to take.

Avery summed up her experience by stating, "Overall, I am so glad and extremely grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of dual enrollment. I'm glad that I get to experience college earlier than most; happy that I am able to meet new people through this program; and especially grateful that I get to experience education in this new, exciting, and opportunistic way. I've loved every moment so far and I'm so excited to see where it will take me in the future."



## El Camino Faculty Member, Dr. René Lozano Recognized for Dedication to Student Success



The Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) recently named El Camino College Counselor and Transfer Center Coordinator Dr. René Lozano as the recipient of the 2025 John Vasconcellos Faculty of the Year Award. This award is presented each year to a faculty member whose leadership at the campus or district level significantly benefits faculty.

As a dedicated FACCC member and former Region C Governor, Dr. Lozano identified a critical gap in leadership and successfully advocated for the creation of the FACCC Counselors Committee. This statewide committee has become an essential forum for community college counselors to collaborate on

key policy issues, including critical legislation such as AB 928, AB 1111, and reforms to districts' academic policies.

Since joining the El Camino faculty in 2008, Dr. Lozano's leadership and unwavering commitment to empowering faculty and improving student outcomes has focused on helping students succeed by serving as a Puente mentor, Transfer Center and Honors Transfer Program counselor, HTP Advisory Council member, Human Development instructor, and former adviser to the UndocuWarriors Club.

As coordinator of the Transfer Center, Dr. Lozano has guided countless students through the transfer process and into the college or university of their dreams. Statewide, El Camino regularly places in the top 10 for transfers to the University of California and in the top five for transfers to the California State University system. Lozano earned a doctorate from Loyola Marymount University, a master's degree from San Diego State University, and a bachelor's from UCLA. Congratulations to Dr. Lozano!



# Coach George Stanich Honored by the El Camino College Foundation at South Bay Lakers College Night



On January 24th, the El Camino College Foundation held a President's Circle donor event at the UCLA Health Training Center where the South Bay Lakers defeated Portland's Rip City Remix and Bronny James scored a career-high 31

points! The South Bay Lakers selected the El Camino College Foundation as their nonprofit charity partner for College Night.

At halftime, legendary El Camino College Head Men's Basketball Coach, George Stanich, was honored for his 37 years coaching and teaching at El Camino College. Coach Stanich was accompanied by his sons, Jim and John Stanich, and was genuinely touched by the remarks and ceremony. At 96 years young, Stanich graciously accepted his award in front of his ECC Warrior family and friends. Congratulations Coach Stanich! Remember, Once a Warrior, Always a Warrior!



Coach Stanich, center, with ECC alum and former basketball player John Sweeney (L) and Cheryl Sweeney (R)



Coach Stanich celebrating with his hands in the air!



A very happy Coach George Stanich with son, John Stanich



Coach Stanich presented with a game jersey from SB Laker Girls

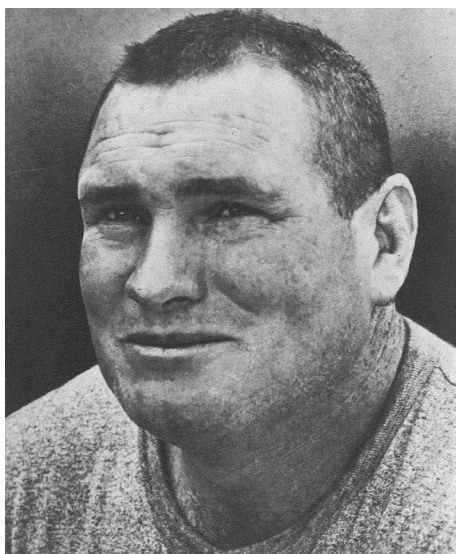


# The Verry Legacy Lives on Through Student Scholarships

The “Verrymen”. For nine seasons from 1952-1961, that’s what El Camino football players were called. Head Coach Norm Verry’s record was stellar: 54-27-2 and he won the conference title in both 1952 and 1954 with 7-0 records both seasons. He took the 1954 conference champs to the then popular “Junior Rose Bowl” in Pasadena, where they lost to Hinds Junior College of Mississippi 13-7.

But tragically in 1961, while traveling on the team plane to the first game of the season in Boise, Idaho, Coach Verry suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and passed away three weeks later at the young age of 39. A life cut short and a heartbreak for all who knew him. He left behind his wife and two sons Rich, 15 and Steve, 12.

Coach Verry started his short but memorable tenure at El Camino as line coach under Head Coach Amby Schindler in 1950. After returning from the Marine Corps in 1952,



Coach Verry was awarded the head coaching position. He played football for USC, earning Third Team All-America and First Team All-Pacific Coast honors in 1942 as Tackle, and was named Player of the Game in the 1944 Rose Bowl. He started his coaching career at USC for two years, then moved to Inglewood High School for one year, and then El Camino College.

A scholarship was created in Coach Verry’s memory at the time of his death for El Camino student athletes, but the funds ran low and the scholarship was retired for many years. In 2003, Norm’s son Rich contacted the College to resurrect the scholarship in his father’s memory. With a renewed sense of purpose in supporting ECC student athletes, the scholarship was renamed the Norm Verry Student Athlete Scholarship and has a robust criteria. In 2018, the scholarship was renamed to

include Coach Verry’s youngest son, Steve, who played football at El Camino, and also passed away at a young age.

The now named Norm and Steve Verry Student Athlete Scholarship provides funding of \$4,400 each (three times larger than the average ECC scholarship of \$1,460) for two students who have achieved academic success, and have

**“We are honored to remember my dad in this way, and will endow this scholarship in perpetuity so his legacy lives. There’s nothing he would have liked more than to award hard work and dedication on and off the field for the student-athlete.”**

— Rich Verry

participated in a leadership role and/or excelled in their sport in a manner that is considered noteworthy by the coach. The recipient must be transferring to a four-year university and scholarship funds are to be sent to the university upon verification of registration. The Verry Scholarship Committee meets annually to review applications from the top athletes at El Camino. The coveted “Verry Scholarship” is an honor for our student-athletes to receive and is awarded at the annual Athletics Hall of Fame Dinner each year.

Kaye and Rich Verry are very engaged in the process and meet the students each year. “My dad was an incredible coach and mentor even in his short time at El Camino,” according to Rich. “He is remembered as one of the great Warrior coaches, and he was an upstanding man. We are honored to

remember my dad in this way, and will endow this scholarship in perpetuity so his legacy lives. There’s nothing he would have liked more than to award hard work and dedication on and off the field for the student-athlete.”





# Bustillo Family Finds Home Sweet Home with the Help of Operation Helping Hands and the El Camino College Foundation



helped the Bustillo family with funding towards a new home and a renewed outlook on life.

Operation Helping Hands is a local nonprofit based in Orange County with the goal of providing basic needs to those experiencing housing insecurity, as well as bringing awareness about homelessness issues. After hearing Christian's story, Operation Helping Hands awarded Christian a scholarship that provides a stipend of \$1,000 a month toward rent expenses. This enabled the Bustillo family to move into their own apartment last December. Operation Helping Hands, in collaboration with the El Camino College Foundation, gave Christian the resources necessary to remain in school,

Desperate. Hopeless. Vulnerable. Scared. Anxious. These words describe how Christian Bustillo must have felt as he navigated life being homeless and struggling as a single parent to three children, while studying at El Camino College. That is, until Operation Helping Hands came in and

**I finally have a chance to reflect on how amazing the end of this year was and how blessed I feel.**

**My kids and I have so much to thank you for. If it wasn't for you (the El Camino College Foundation) and the Helping Hands Organization, I would still be homeless.**

— Christian Bustillo / El Camino College Student and Operation Helping Hands Scholarship Recipient

enabling him to focus on finishing his education without the burden of housing instability. Eventually, this will afford Christian and his family a better life. As long as Christian maintains the minimum scholarship requirements, he will continue receiving the monthly stipend until he graduates from El Camino.

Please read a heartwarming excerpt from Christian's thank you letter to Operation Helping Hands:

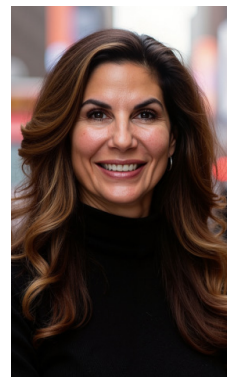
Dear Angels,

Around a year ago this month, your operation came across a struggling father that was at his last breaking point in life. A father of three with no direction in life and no place to fend for his kids. This father did not know what type of scholarship this was, all this father did was pour his soul into a simple letter showing the struggles that this father had been through... You did what your name stands for, you lent a helping hand and for that I'm forever grateful. I would not be sitting at my OWN desk in my OWN house if it wasn't for your help. You guys have given me life, have given me courage and have helped put a roof over my kids' heads. The reactions and feelings that my kids had on Christmas when I wrapped the keys and gave it to them as their Christmas present is a feeling that will replay in my head over-and-over again. My promise to you guys is to finish school and tell my story to the world and share your name so people can know that no matter what happens to you in this life, there will always be a helping hand...

Thank you,  
Christian, Tupu, Titus, Trinity and  
Chase Bustillo



Kim Valentine, Attorney and Founder/President of Operation Helping Hands believes that opportunities and education are the keys to success. After experiencing homelessness herself in high school, she became an ambassador of resilience and hope. She credits education to what changed her trajectory in life. "I no longer ask myself where I will sleep at night. But I know that so many people still do. So I continually ask myself a new question; one that I feel truly blessed to ask. How can I lend a helping hand today?"



# Call for El Camino College Distinguished Alumni Nominations!



The El Camino College Foundation is pleased to recognize the accomplishments of our alumni through the Distinguished Alumni program. Nominations for induction into El Camino College's Distinguished Alumni are now being accepted and will be recognized at our Distinguished Alumni and Gratitude Awards Dinner in Spring 2026. The nomination deadline is July 31, 2025.

Many of our alumni are highly respected in the community and have achieved great success in their careers and lives. We are honored to acknowledge these individuals and remember the strong educational foundation El Camino College provided them as they embarked on their professional journey.

Please visit El Camino College Foundation's Distinguished Alumni page for additional information, including the Nomination Form, which outlines all the nomination selection criteria.

## The El Camino College 2025 Athletics Hall of Fame Dinner and Induction Ceremony Scheduled for May 29th

We are pleased to announce the 32nd Athletics Hall of Fame class who will be honored on May 29, 2025. The 14 individual inductees exemplify what it means to be a member of the Warriors during their time at El Camino College. Additional Hall of Fame event information, including honorees' bios, can be found on the ECC Warriors Athletics website.

Congratulations to all! We are very proud of all your accomplishments at El Camino College and beyond!



### 2025 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

**Toiya Barnes '86** | Track & Field

**Antonio Chatman '98** | Football

**Kristi Copeland '93** | Soccer

**Keith Davis '02** | Track & Field

**Tim Drevno '88** | Football

**Martina Exlerova '15** | Swimming

**Brian Flowers '05** | Football

**Beverly Hazell '06** | Volleyball

**Elizabeth Hazell '02** | Volleyball

**Ontario Johnson '84** | Basketball

**Omarr Morgan '95** | Football

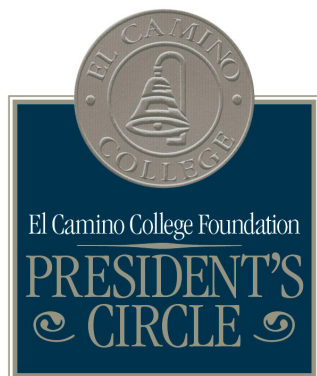
**Shannon Murphy '01** | Softball

**Charles White '88** | Basketball

**Ivan Wilson '92** | Football

# A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Generous Donors

We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of our donors who make our mission to El Camino College possible.



We thank our annual President's Circle donors for their unwavering generosity of our students. Your gifts of kindness do not go unrecognized!

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Thanks to the support of these generous donors, we've raised funds for scholarships, STEM initiatives, expanded educational programs, and improved resources for students.

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# Meet the El Camino College Foundation 2024-2025 Board of Directors

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the El Camino College Foundation is to support the success of students, faculty, and staff in the pursuit of their higher educational goals and career objectives by strategically developing community relationships and raising funds.



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The Foundation's volunteer Board of Directors work hard to advocate for the college and make a difference in our community. We thank them for their passion, leadership, time and talents.

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For more information, please contact [foundation@elcamino.edu](mailto:foundation@elcamino.edu) · [elcaminocollegefoundation.org](http://elcaminocollegefoundation.org) · 310.660.3683