



# CHANCELLOR'S NEWSLETTER

In this month's issue, we honor...

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

## CHANCELLOR'S PERSPECTIVE



VCCCD Chancellor  
Bernard Luskin

This issue is dedicated to celebrating Black History Month (February) and Women's History Month (March) by acknowledging the impact that African Americans and women have had on the growth and success of community colleges nationwide and specifically in the Ventura County Community College District. In particular, we acknowledge the men and women who, with our students in mind, have mobilized the movement to make college more affordable. In 2006, Ventura College led the charge to start the first College Promise in the State of California. Since the inception of the Ventura College Promise, 22 College Promise programs have been established in California (13 of which were recently announced). Throughout the nation there are now more than 150 College Promise programs across 37 states.<sup>1</sup>

Promise will start to serve students in the Fall of 2017 providing free-tuition to eligible local high school seniors. The program objective is to provide access to higher education un-impeded by financial constraints. Beyond providing free tuition, Azari's vision for the program is a community focus aimed at creating a college-going culture in the surrounding Oxnard community.

Nationally, America's College Promise, the signature proposal of President Barack Obama, the first African American president of the United States, hailed the notion that community college tuition should be free to any responsible American student. This White House proposal resulted in more than \$100 million in America's Promise Grants<sup>2</sup> awarded by the Department of Labor and influenced a nationwide movement and the adoption of college promise programs across the country.

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VCCCD Board of Trustees

(L-R) Larry Kennedy, Chair Bernardo Perez, Trustee Stephen Blum, Trustee Dianne McKay, and Vice Chair Arturo Hernández.

Recently, Oxnard College President Cynthia Azari announced the launch of the Oxnard College Promise. The Oxnard

## Ready? Set. Move!

The Ventura County Community College District administrative center is relocating to Camarillo. The move is scheduled for Friday, April 21 through Sunday, April 23, 2017. The new address is 761 East Daily Drive, Camarillo, CA. Phone numbers for the DAC and all employees will remain the same. The building is 38,893 square feet of office space situated on a 20-acre professional office zoned and master-planned seven building site. The new site is centrally located and provides improved accessibility for students, faculty, staff and community members within the VCCCD service areas.



New Camarillo location for the VCCCD district office

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## Ventura County's Dr. Irene Pinkard, one amongst 101 extraordinary leaders

In "101 Ventura County Leaders Go Back In Time to Their Twenty-First Birthday," co-authors Dianne McKay (VCCCD Board Trustee), partner and Scott Harris, president, Mustang Marketing, share words of wisdom from Dr. Irene Pinkard. Pinkard, the first African American to be elected to Oxnard City Council, would give the following advice to her 21-year old self, as quoted on page 73:

*Remember that life is a journey of many experiences. Take each one as a lesson to improve and build on for the next experience in this journey called life. Points that will help you succeed and survive in your life's journey:*

*Be you, and don't let people change you.*

*When people show who they are, believe them.*

*Not everyone is going to like you, and that's okay.*

*People will come into and out of your life – don't try to hold on to people who are pulling you down.*

*Friends will be few, but you will have many acquaintances!*

*Stay positive, and know you can do anything with planning and preparation!*

*Most importantly, stay grounded, pray and enjoy the journey – God has prepared you!*

*Enjoy the experience!*

Pinkard also holds the distinction of being the first African-American female vice president of administrative services/business at Oxnard College, Ventura College and statewide. She is



VCCCD Trustee  
Dianne McKay



Dr. Irene Pinkard

an active leader in the Ventura County community. Her contributions include co-founding the Ventura County Chapter of the Black American Political Association of California and the Black Women's Leadership Conference. As the executive director of Pinkard Youth Institute, she provides various opportunities to African American youth. For more than 20 years, Pinkard has coordinated activities for youth, including a college tour during spring break and summer internship programs.

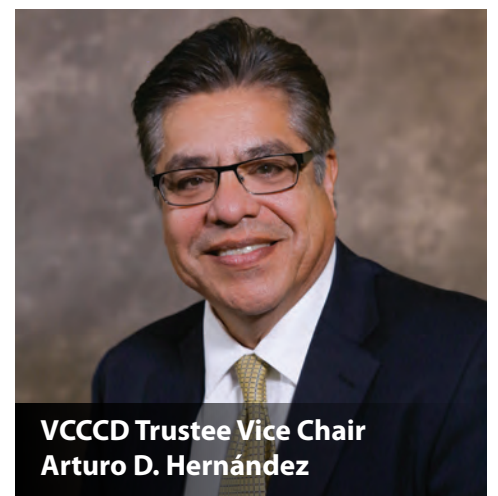
References: <http://citizensjournal.us/events/event/oxnard-celebrating-black-history-month/>  
<http://www.mustangmktg.com/blog/mustang-marketing-releases-ventura-county-leaders-book/>

## Vice Chair Arturo Hernández Recognized by VCSBA

Ventura County Community College District Board Trustee Arturo D. Hernández, Vice Chair, was recognized by the Ventura County School Board Association (VCSBA) for more than 25 years of school board service during the March 13, 2017, VCSBA Dinner Meeting. Hernández has served on the Ventura County Community College District Board of Trustees for 16 years; and has served as a trustee on local Ventura County school boards for the past 25 years, including the Oxnard Union High School District and Rio School Boards. Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Stan Mantooth and VCCCD Chancellor Bernard Luskin were among the guests who attended the meeting at the Ventura County Office of Education Conference & Educational Services Center.

Hernández represents Area 5 of the VCCCD. Area 5 is comprised of Oxnard, Oxnard Shores, Mandalay Bay, Silver Strand, Hollywood Beach, Hollywood by the Sea, Channel Islands Harbor, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Del Norte Area, Oxnard Plain, Strickland and a portion of Naval Base Ventura County Port Hueneme. Hernández is a native of Oxnard and a lifelong Ventura County resident.

Hernández joined several other school board members of Ventura County in receiving the meritorious service award in recognition of their many years of service. Congratulations to Vice Chair Hernández on this distinguished accomplishment!



VCCCD Trustee Vice Chair  
Arturo D. Hernández

## Board of Trustees

### Board Chair Bernardo Perez passionate about undocumented students' privacy and safety

Board Chair Bernardo Perez and members of the Ventura County Community College District Board of Trustees are focused on helping the District and the colleges continue working toward providing students with access to comprehensive quality educational opportunities that support student learning and success. To that end, Chair Perez, along with fellow Board members, Chancellor Bernard Luskin and staff across the District are focused on strengthening relationships with local county school boards, building the District's workforce and economic development programs and raising the District's presence throughout the county.

In addition, led by Perez, the Board is passionate about key issues, one of which is protecting the privacy and safety of undocumented students. To provide comfort and as an expression of support, the VCCCD Board of Trustees passed Resolution No. 2017.01 Resolution in Support of California Dream Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Students and Programs during its March 2017 Board meeting. "With this resolution, we joined the University of California, the California State University and the California Community Colleges to urge protection of the rights of all students to obtain a higher education



in California," stated Perez. "We want to assure all students that their privacy, safety and security is at the forefront of our decisions to support them," he added.

This resolution also institutionalizes District support for Assembly Bills 540, 130 and 131. The bills allow undocumented students who have applied for Citizen/Permanent resident status to pay resident fees and apply for privately funded scholarships and assistance from EOPS, CARE, or CalWORKs and other state aid, in addition to providing increased opportunities for AB 540 students to receive financial aid.

### VCCCD advocates for veterans during the ACCT National Legislative Summit

Ventura County Community College District Board Chair Bernardo Perez, Trustee Larry Kennedy and Chancellor Bernard Luskin attended the first public presentation by the Department of Education Secretary Elisabeth "Betsy" DeVos, as part of the 2017 Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) National Legislative Summit, held February 13-16, 2017, in Washington D.C. "This is an indication of how important Secretary DeVos considers American community colleges," stated Chair Perez. Trustee Stephen Blum also travelled to Washington to join the Chancellor and the trustees in meetings with key legislators to advocate on behalf of student veterans throughout the California Community College system and to discuss the VCCCD's leadership role in the newly-formed California Community Colleges Veterans Caucus. For more information on the ACCT summit, please visit <https://www.nls.acct.org/>. To learn more about the veterans caucus, contact the VCCCD office at 805-652-5508.



California Community Colleges Veterans Summit

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA



VETERANS CAUCUS



(L-R) Larry Kennedy, Ventura County Community College District Board Trustee and Co-Chair California Community Colleges Veterans Caucus; Bernard Luskin, VCCCD Chancellor; Lance Izumi, Chair, Board of Directors, Foundation for California Community Colleges; and Jonathan Lightman, President, Executive Director, Faculty Association of California Community Colleges. Photo in front of the "Eyes of Freedom" at the California Community Colleges Veterans Summit in Sacramento, CA.

## Awards and Recognitions

### 2017 VCCCD Classified Employees Recognized for Distinction

The Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD) Board of Trustees acknowledged four 2017 VCCCD Classified Employee of the Year nominees during the regular February board meeting Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2017. Chair Bernardo Perez announced the nominees and presented awards to the distinguished honorees:

**Dana Boynton**, *Ventura College*

**Ashley Chelonis**, *Oxnard College*

**Linda Resendiz**, *Moorpark College*

**Mike Rose**, *District Administrative Center*

**Dana Boynton** joined the District in 2007 as a library assistant in technical services at Ventura College. Her current title is library technician and she serves as an integral part of the Ventura College library team. Boynton is praised for demonstrating student-centered logic, working tirelessly to eliminate barriers that inhibit students from accessing library resources, and advocating for student-friendly approaches to resolving problems. Her love for Ventura College, the Evelyn and Howard Boroughs Library and serving students is an inspiration to others.

**Ashley Chelonis**, Instructional Technologies/Designer at Oxnard College, joined the District in 2010. She leads the districtwide Instructional Technology Advisory Committee as the senior instructional technologies/designer. Chelonis is devoted to instructing and

supporting staff, faculty, and students in the use and implementation of technologies that support student success; she is dedicated to improving distance education as a pathway to student learning. Chelonis also served as the Moorpark College Classified Senate Secretary for two years before joining Oxnard College. She is a licensed foster parent and a youth leader and mentor.

**Linda Resendiz**, Executive Assistant to the President of Moorpark College, joined the District in 2008. Her work ethic and commitment to excellence makes her a tremendous asset to the college. She often works late or is willing to come into the office on her days off to complete projects. Her optimism, professionalism and school spirit are infectious; she frequently attends productions and sporting events hosted by the Moorpark College Performing Arts division. Her leisure time is spent with family and at the gym where she helps motivate others and shares her love of fitness.

**Mike Rose** joined the District in 2007 in the Information Technology Department as a Senior Programmer Analyst; he was promoted to Director of Software Applications and Development in August 2016. Rose was instrumental in launching the District's mobile app for mobile payments, push messaging, course



*Congratulations to Ashley Chelonis, Instructional Technologies/Designer at Oxnard College. Chelonis was awarded the 2017 Oxnard College Classified Employee of the Year and has been selected as the 2017 VCCCD Classified Employee of the Year.*

schedules, news, emergency notifications and more. Through his leadership of the districtwide Student Success Initiative, Rose led the VCCCD to becoming the first district in the state to successfully submit required Student Success and Support Program (3SP) Management Information Systems data. In 2015, he received the California Community College Chief Information Systems Officers Association's Campus Technology Excellence Award and the Excellence in Community Building and Support of Peers and Colleges from

*continued on page 5*



*Dana Boynton, 2017 Classified Employee of the Year, representing Ventura College.*



*Linda Resendiz, 2017 Classified Employee of the Year, representing Moorpark College.*



*Mike Rose, 2017 Classified Employee of the Year, representing the District Administrative Center.*



A<sup>2</sup>MEND Mentee Scholarship recipients with Moorpark College faculty and administrators. (L-R) Nadia Monosov, Cynthia Barnett-Shelby, Ranford Hopkins, Dr. Amanuel Gebru, Steven Zaldana, Roy Beck III, Jalon Kitchen, Riyen Blount, Damien (DJ) Farmer, Cameron Mayweather and Chad Basile.

### Moorpark College African America Male Students Awarded A<sup>2</sup>MEND Mentee Scholarships

The African American Male Educational Network and Development (A<sup>2</sup>MEND) recently awarded six Moorpark College students with the A<sup>2</sup>MEND Mentee Scholarship during its 10th Annual Conference at the Westin LAX Hotel in Los Angeles. A<sup>2</sup>MEND is comprised of African American male administrators who use their scholarly and professional expertise to foster institutional change within the community college system. The A<sup>2</sup>MEND Mentee Program provides support, guidance, professional development and networking opportunities for members and students. The scholarship provides financial support for tuition, books, and living fees to students with special qualifications.

“We congratulate Roy Beck, Riyen Blount, Damien (DJ) Farmer, Jalon Kitchen, Cameron Mayweather, and Steven Zaldana who each received a \$750 scholarship,” stated Moorpark College Dean of Behavioral & Social Sciences Amanuel Gebru, A<sup>2</sup>MEND Executive Director. “Each mentee is an exemplary student at Moorpark College and we are pleased that they were recognized as part of the mentee program that awarded a total of 59 students as Community College and Transfer Scholars,” added Gebru.

For more information about A<sup>2</sup>MEND, to donate to the program or receive a scholarship, please call 888.799.3970 or email [info@a2mend.org](mailto:info@a2mend.org).

### VCCCD Featured in VMware Case Study

The Ventura County Community College District Information Technology (IT) department developed a Strategic Technology Plan to align the innovative learning tools the District uses in serving the needs of faculty, staff and students. As part of the strategic plan, the District set a goal to modernize its data center to address availability, performance and scalability with the storage area network (SAN) infrastructure.

To resolve existing problems, the District “replaced its legacy Fibre Channel SAN with VMware vSAN, deploying hybrid storage clusters with a focus on modernizing all four of its data centers.” This process virtualized storage to allow the District to meet expanding needs. The conversion translates into uninterrupted learning, improved business continuity, and reduced risk amongst other business benefits.<sup>1</sup>

A major determinant in why the storage was virtualized was to fulfill IT standards. “Our number-one unwritten IT rule is do not stop classroom instruction and number two is do not interrupt the colleges business operations,” VCCCD Systems Administrator Aaron Kay, quoted in the case study.

The vSAN storage clusters provide 200TB of capacity supporting more than 500 virtual machines. IT has received positive and enthusiastic feedback with respect to the change. “We have seen an increase in efficiency and a reduction in complexity for IT storage management,” VCCCD Associate Vice Chancellor, Information Technology, Dave Fuhrmann also shared in the case study by VMware. Going forward storage will not act as a barrier while the District explores new ways to support student learning and success using technology.

To view the complete study, please visit [http://www.vmware.com/company/customers.html#Customer=/content/web-apps/customers/V/Ventura\\_County\\_Community\\_College\\_District](http://www.vmware.com/company/customers.html#Customer=/content/web-apps/customers/V/Ventura_County_Community_College_District)

<sup>1</sup>VM Ware. vSphere-Focused Customer eBook. 2017

### 2017 Classified Employees Recognized - continued from page 4

Ellucian. In the spirit of giving back, Rose provides leadership in technology, digital communications and facilities at Orchard Community Church in Ventura where he serves as an Elder and Sonshine Preschool, also in Ventura.

Chelonis was selected as the 2017 VCCCD Classified Employee of the Year. Her name will be forwarded to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors for consideration for the statewide 2017 California Community Colleges Classified Employee of the Year Award. This award honors California Community College classified employees demonstrating the highest level of commitment to the mission of community colleges, professional ethics and standards, service to the institution through participation in professional and/or community activities, and service as a leader beyond the local institution.

## Employment Training Panel awards \$88,750 to VCCCD

The State of California's Employment Training Panel awarded \$88,750 to the Ventura County Community College District to train 35 workers in equipment operation and production skills, workplace communication, software applications, database management and report generation. "By becoming an ETP training provider, our District's Office of Economic and Workforce Development will be able to expand its contract training services to new and existing businesses that would not otherwise be able to afford customized worker training," stated

VCCCD Vice Chancellor, Educational Services, Rick Post.

"The Employment Training Panel makes a difference for employers and workers throughout California by investing in a highly-skilled and well-trained workforce," said Stewart Knox, the Employment Training Panel's Executive Director, in a press release dated February 24, 2017.<sup>1</sup>

"Our partnerships with community colleges help to connect employers with quality job training, which is especially important for small to medium-sized

employers with human resource budget constraints. These employers are able to leverage training funds and the community college expertise to increase their workers' skills to their competitive advantage."

Congratulations to Vice Chancellor Post and VC Innovates Grant Director Holly Correa for their efforts in growing the District's contract educational services.

<sup>1</sup> <https://etp.ca.gov/Press%20Releases/Latest%20Press%20Release/May%202016.aspx>

## Ventura County Community College District Signs Navy Education Agreement

The Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD) and Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWD) signed an Educational Partnership Agreement in collaboration to educate VCCCD students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). VCCCD Vice Chancellor, Educational Services, Rick Post, met with representatives from NAWCWD and the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) in mid-February to discuss the role of each party and the benefits of preparing students for potential career opportunities, specifically related to the technical applications required by the United States Navy.

"Our goal is to inspire students and broaden their perspective through STEM education," stated VCCCD Board Chair Bernardo Perez. "We are excited to expand students' knowledge about the many opportunities available in the STEM fields," he added. "This is a game changer and we look forward to working with these organizations to provide students and faculty with direct access to state-of-the-art facilities, technology and other resources that would not otherwise be available to them," added VCCCD Chancellor Bernard Luskin.

"Further developments will continue to be announced over the coming months to strengthen operations and facilitate action pertaining to the objectives of the agreement," said Luskin.



Ventura County Community College District Bernard Luskin, chancellor; Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) Alan Jaeger, office of research and technology applications manager, Port Hueneme; VCCCD Holly Correa, grant director, VC Innovates; Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWD) Bill Cunneen, president Missile Technology Historical Society, Point Mugu; Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) EXWC Cheryl Monzon, ORTA, stem coordinator, Port Hueneme; NAWCWD Cameron K. Bruce, director business development, Point Mugu; and VCCCD Rick Post, vice chancellor, Educational Services.

## CONNECTING BUSINESS & EDUCATION

The Ventura County P-20 Council is a regional collaborative that helps students advance from preschool (P) through grad school (20) and into rewarding careers. We have facilitated more than \$71 million in grants for local education. Be part of our effort to build a skilled local workforce ready to meet the needs of Ventura County business.



- Find interns
- Host facility tours
- Participate on an industry steering committee
- Provide guest speakers and mentors
- Provide job shadowing opportunities

[vcp20.org/join-us](http://vcp20.org/join-us)

## Academic Excellence

### Oxnard College hosts Second Annual Distance Education Summit

Oxnard College hosted the Second Annual District-Wide Distance Education Summit at the Oxnard College Performing Arts Building in February. The summit included opening remarks by Chancellor Bernard Luskin, Oxnard College President Cynthia Azari, and Associate Vice Chancellor of Information Technology Dave Fuhrmann.

Breakout sessions and discussions were facilitated with the objective of exploring segments in distance education, including the California Community College Chancellor's Office Online Education Initiative (OEI). OEI Executive Director, Jory Hadsell and his executive leadership team were featured guests.

VCCCD colleges (Moorpark College, Oxnard College and Ventura College) are participating in the OEI, which provides a common course management system (Canvas) to 103 of the 113 California Community Colleges. In addition, Ventura College is one of eight colleges participating statewide in the OEI Course Exchange Pilot Program. The course

exchange will allow students to register for distance education classes across participating campuses throughout the state.

Ventura College Dean of Distance Education Gwendolyn Lewis-Huddleston led efforts to execute the District's second distance education summit. The summit was inclusive of students, staff, and faculty. A panel discussion allowed students to share their perspective on distance education.

Luskin, who has an expansive background in the field of distance education, served as founding Chancellor of Jones International University, where Hadsell attended and graduated during Luskin's tenure as Chancellor. The VCCCD proudly takes a leadership role in distance education, committed to working with the OEI to increase high-quality online course offerings to ultimately better serve students in their pursuit of achieving student success.



VCCCD Chancellor Bernard Luskin



OEI Executive Director, Jory Hadsell

### ACCJC reaffirmed accreditation to Ventura County Community College District colleges

February 2017, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC), reaffirmed accreditation for 18 months for Moorpark College, Oxnard College and Ventura College. Following the September 2016 accreditation visits and after careful review of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Reports and evidentiary materials submitted by each institution, the ACCJC determined that each college "is in substantial compliance" with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies for reaffirmation. An 18-month review of recommended improvements, noted in the evaluations, followed by a visit to each campus by Commission representatives will be scheduled.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we are pleased with the findings of the ACCJC," stated VCCCD Board Chair Bernardo Perez. "The Board is proud of the hard work the colleges put forth in the self-evaluation reports and look forward to supporting the college presidents in meeting any recommended improvements suggested by the ACCJC," added Perez.

The ACCJC's Eligibility Requirements and Standards may be found on the ACCJC website at [www.accjc.org](http://www.accjc.org).

### Commencement Dates



#### Oxnard College

Wed., May 17, 2017, 6:00 pm

#### Moorpark College

Thurs., May 18, 2017, 6:00 pm

#### Ventura College

Fri., May 19, 2017, 4:00 pm

### SHIFT HAPPENS New Hires and Promotions

#### Brian K. Akers

*(transferred from Oxnard College)  
Information Technology Support Specialist III  
January 17, 2017*

#### Janet L. Brailsford

*Accountant  
February 13, 2017*

#### Holly M. Correa

*Grant Director, CCPTG  
January 30, 2017*

#### Leticia Garcia

*(returned to DAC from Ventura College)  
Payroll Technician, November 29, 2016*

#### Beth E. Shephard

*Senior Administrative Assistant  
November 21, 2016*

#### Alexandria M. Wright

*Director, Economic and Workforce Development  
March 27, 2017*

### Hidden Figures: Students tell stories of powerful women in history

In celebration of Black History Month and Women's History Month we asked students from Moorpark College, Oxnard College and Ventura College to share their insights on the powerful historical female figures showcased in the Academy-Award Nominated motion picture "Hidden Figures." Students proudly shared how Mary Jackson, Katherine Goble Johnson and Dorothy Vaughan have forever influenced their future outlook on determination, perseverance and achievement.



#### **HIDDEN FIGURES: Katherine Johnson**

**By Aryana Carpenter**  
*Moorpark College student*

Katherine Coleman Goble Johnson is an extremely influential African American woman who was a hidden hero during segregation. Her role in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) rocket launches was to calculate the longitude, latitude, and landing points of the rockets. She would also confirm or deny the calculations performed by her male counterparts. Johnson was a true hidden figure, because she was unable to claim her work. She fought for recognition, but was not allowed to include her name on the calculations reports she had created. In the movie, Colonel John Glenn, the first American to orbit the Earth, put his life in Johnson's hands by trusting her calculations and getting into the rocket only if she said it was a go.

My thoughts regarding "Hidden Figures" were bitter sweet, because no one knew about these phenomenal women who worked at NASA and fought hard for what was rightfully theirs. I also thought it was a very powerful film that touched

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#### **HIDDEN FIGURES: Dorothy Vaughan**

**By Dejahnae Brown**  
*Ventura College student*

Dorothy Vaughan was born September 20, 1910, in Kansas City, Missouri. She started her career at the Langley Research Center of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) in 1943, as a mathematician and programmer. She was assigned to the West Area Computers, an all-African American group of women whose job was mostly processing data. In 1949, Vaughan was promoted to acting supervisor. Although Vaughan was already acting and working like a supervisor, she received neither the pay nor the title until the death of her White supervisor. In 1961, when the first programmed (non-human) computer was made, Vaughan became proficient in FORTRAN (a programming language used for calculating numbers), and taught it to her colleagues so they would have an easier transition to the new electronic dialect. By doing this, she helped put John Glenn, Jr., the first American man to orbit Earth, in space.

The movie, "Hidden Figures," was absolutely stellar (pun intended). One of my favorite parts is when Dorothy

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#### **HIDDEN FIGURES: Mary Winston-Jackson**

**By Stacie Conway**  
*Oxnard College, Associated Student  
Government Interim President*

Courageous, spirited, and driven are only a handful of words to express the greatness of Mary Winston-Jackson. A revolutionary of our time, Jackson represents not only people of color but all individuals who have struggled to achieve their dreams. Her story is pivotal because she overcame the state of Virginia's segregation and massive resistance laws, to become the first female African-American Engineer at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). She was able to change the image of what an engineer should be, to the reality of what an engineer can be; a woman of color.

Jackson was born April 9, 1921, in Hampton, Virginia. She performed remarkably well in high school and in 1942 earned a dual bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Physical Sciences from the Hampton Institute. After various career paths, fate would place an extraordinary opportunity at Jackson's doorstep. In 1951, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics at Langley was in need

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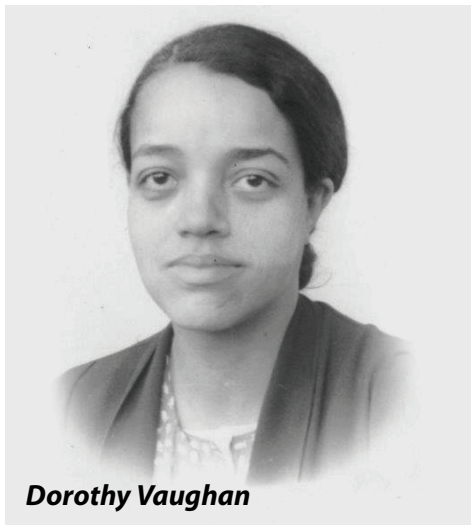
**Katherine Johnson**

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me emotionally and physically because I too am an African American woman. This movie came at the perfect time, because women need to see how important they are and how we need to stand up for our rights.

Johnson's story inspired me to never let anything or anyone stop me from achieving my dreams, and never allow the color of my skin or my gender stop me from accomplishing my goals. If Johnson could achieve her goals during segregation, then I can strive for greater goals as a woman today. This movie made females of all ages feel like they are able to be mathematicians and scientists; it gives girls the ability to aspire to have dreams they did not know they were capable of and to show sisterhood by lifting each other up.

"Hidden Figures" can be a learning opportunity for every gender and age because it shows us how we can work together and put aside our differences in order to achieve a common goal. We cannot move forward without accepting how unique and different we all are as human beings. Students get to walk away from this film by learning to never quit what is important to them. Every person is going to struggle and fall at some point in their life. In order to achieve and appreciate success you have to know what it feels like to struggle. True success comes when you learn from mistakes and work hard towards your goal to never be hidden and always shine.



**Dorothy Vaughan**

*continued from page 8*

Vaughan (played by Octavia Spencer), realizing that the new IBM machine would essentially take the women's jobs from the West Computing Section, teaches herself FORTRAN. I like to think that her drive came from when Mary Jackson (played by Janelle Monae) says, "Every time we have a chance to get ahead, they move the finish line." She proved them wrong and showed NACA that they needed her.

As a young, African-American woman, it can be hard to keep my head up; but then, I think of women like Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, and Mary Jackson, who with all odds against them, helped put a man into space. In a 1994 interview, Vaughan said, "I changed what I could, and what I couldn't, I endured." She was strong. Women, especially Black women, had to be strong. There weren't many opportunities to work at NACA for women, let alone Black women; but, there probably weren't many Black women graduating from college at age 19, either. She is an inspiration to me to work harder. Not just for my future, but for those who paved the way for a chance to be someone better.

Hope is important for any kind of advancement -- whether helping put the first man in space, overcoming racism and sexism, standing with our communities and petitioning for their rights, or simply helping a classmate study. One thing is clear, however. You have to want it, and you have to work for it. "Hidden



**Mary Winston-Jackson**

*continued from page 8*

of talented minds. This is when Jackson's career began. She started as a research mathematician, which back in those days was called a "human computer." In 1953, she advanced to a more permanent position at the request of K. Czarnecki an engineer in NASA's Supersonic Wind Tunnels. Here, he witnessed Jackson's talents firsthand and encouraged her to pursue additional training for a promotion to become an engineer.

The movie "Hidden Figures" provides a fresh perspective to a harsh reality. The injustices of the past should not be taken lightly. Nor should we forget the triumphs of those before us. Mary Winston-Jackson is an inspiration, because she was fearless and spoke up for her rights as a human being. She had a God-given talent that no one could deny. The contributions of Mary Jackson, along with colleagues Katherine Goble Johnson and Dorothy Vaughan, three African-American women, was instrumental in knocking down barriers of inequality in the workplace. Their courageous spirit and resilience to adversity can serve as a learning opportunity for all.

"Hidden Figures" represents an opportunity for people to find inspiration. It represents power, persistence, drive and dedication. It delivers a message that when there are coordinates set for progress, it's nearly impossible to change its course. I urge everyone to set a course for progress, and allow yourself to soar into success.

### Q&A with Oxnard College graduate Michelle Ascencion, Oxnard City Clerk

Michelle Ascencion is the recently elected Oxnard City Clerk. She is the first African American city clerk of Oxnard (fourth female city clerk) and happens to be an Oxnard College graduate. As an alumnus of Oxnard College, a resident of Oxnard for 34 years, a devoted wife and mother of four and one who is proud to be in public service in her hometown community, we feature Ascencion with honor and distinction.

**VCCCD:** What are your first memories about moving to Oxnard?

**MA:** *I remember moving to Oxnard at about age six. Coming from a tough part of Los Angeles, I think my parents saw moving to Oxnard as an opportunity to live in a safe, family oriented community. Oxnard was a much smaller community back then. I remember thinking we had moved to the country, because I had never seen a farm before, and there were farms all around us!*

**VCCCD:** As a child what was your dream job?

**MA:** *When I was young, I thought about becoming a business woman or a lawyer, but by high school I had decided I wanted to be a veterinarian.*

**VCCCD:** How did you end up majoring in journalism?

**MA:** *When I first started college, I took biology and chemistry classes in my first few years, and I really struggled. After bombing three chemistry tests one semester, I figured out that being a veterinarian was not a likely prospect. I was uncertain as to what I was going to do. Concurrently, I was taking an English composition class with Professor Lynn Fauth who told me, "Don't you know you are an amazing writer?" After that it kind of clicked and I switched majors. Dr. Gary Morgan was also an important influence; when I transferred he recommended me for a journalism scholarship which I was awarded.*

**VCCCD:** What do you remember about attending Oxnard College?

**MA:** *I was actually a single mom while attending Oxnard College, so unfortunately I didn't have much time to be social; I was too busy working and going to school. However, I remember my professors and classmates were always very supportive and encouraging, and that left a deep impression on me.*

**VCCCD:** Where did you transfer to from Oxnard College?

**MA:** *I transferred to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in 1996. At the time, I was making a decision between Cal Poly and California State University, Fullerton. Dr. Morgan advised that I go to Cal Poly for many reasons. I followed his advice and chose Cal Poly and I'm very happy that I made that decision. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Journalism with a concentration in Public Relations in 1999.*

**VCCCD:** What were your next moves after graduating?

**MA:** *I did an internship with the United Way where I got a taste of what it was going to be like working in the field I studied in. After graduating, I worked a couple of short stints at different companies and eventually went into the non-profit sector where I would work for five years. During that time, I worked for the Rescue Mission and the American Cancer Society. I really enjoyed working at the Rescue Mission because there I became like a "kid sister" to many of the guys in the program, and we could just stop and pray together whenever we were going through a hard time; it was really special. The American Cancer Society was also a very rewarding job, where I helped patients and caregivers and helped organize various fundraisers. I went on to work for the City of Port Hueneme for 10 years and most recently the Ventura Regional Sanitation District before the election.*



**Michelle Ascencion**  
Oxnard City Clerk

**VCCCD:** How did you decide to run for public office?

**MA:** *Serving for eight years as the City Clerk in Port Hueneme, I had wanted to become the city clerk of my hometown, Oxnard. When I found out last August that the then-city clerk was not running for re-election, I had five days to decide if I was going to run. I really wanted the position, so I just accepted running for election as the hiring process. After getting yeses from everyone in my inner circle, I decided to run and started my campaign.*

**VCCCD:** What was most difficult about running for office?

**MA:** *It was exhausting; I would work all day then attend an event at night or walk neighborhoods. I had to learn to overcome shyness and fear of speaking in public, which terrified me. Also, my mom was very sick and passed away in October, which was devastating. However, my husband was a huge source of support throughout the whole process, and I had lots of help and encouragement from many friends and family.*

**VCCCD:** What did you find out about the community through campaigning?

**MA:** *Even though Oxnard is a large city that keeps growing, it is very small in the sense that everyone seems to know each other!*

### Ola V. Washington, Ventura College distinguished faculty of 43 years

After 43 years of teaching at Ventura College, Professor Ola V. Washington has been a steadfast figure representing African American culture, traditions and values within the Ventura County community for decades. Beyond the vibrant colors, Washington is an authentic woman who has grown from the most challenging of circumstances to be an anchor in her community.

Born in Ennis, Texas, deep in poverty and racial injustice, Washington was the third eldest of nine children and always had a natural affinity toward education. "I remember they would look through the window of the school house and point at me and say there's that little girl who gets straight As," Washington joyfully recalled.

Approaching the 9th grade, Washington's parents divorced and her mother sold all of their belongings for \$125 and moved all nine children to Bakersfield, California. In high school, "I would go door to door asking neighbors if they could take me to school," she remembered. Despite academic talent and passion, familial circumstances led to Washington dropping out of high school. She then moved back to Texas where she met a young soldier, serving in the United States Army, and got married at the age of 17. With income from her husband's military service, Washington looked forward to returning to school; but, within the first year of marriage she became pregnant and had her first child.

As a military spouse, Washington experienced living in various places, including California, Kansas, Oklahoma, Washington, and Germany. During the two years she lived in Germany, her life was greatly impacted. "I loved the German people and they loved me. It was my first experience with living in a culture where I did not encounter prejudice," stated Washington. She became fluent in German within five months and today speaks German as a second language.

Returning to the states, Washington worked several jobs to make ends meet. While working at Fort Riley in Kansas, she broke barriers by becoming the first Black Supper Club waitress on base. As a high class waitress in the officers' club, she was surrounded by high-ranking military men who recognized her intelligence and encouraged her to continue her education. She knew she needed a high school diploma to obtain any mobility. After receiving her high school diploma from Bakersfield High School, Evening Division, she moved to Oxnard to be closer to her extended family that helped her with her children while she pursued her educational goals. Thereafter, Washington enrolled at Ventura College alongside her two sisters, where it would take her 10 years to get her A.A. degree, she likes to say.

Washington credits Ventura College for changing her life. Gary Johnson, a history professor at Ventura College, influenced her to become a college instructor and to attend the University of California, Santa Barbara. While attending Ventura College, Washington was the vice president of the Black Student Union and led student actions to get administration to hire more Black professors and to establish African American History courses.

With guidance and a recommendation from Johnson, in 1970 she transferred to UCSB. A single mother, she was socially active during the climax of social unrest regarding domestic and foreign social issues during that period. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa and received the distinction of commencement speaker. She felt a responsibility to "speak the truth," as she puts it, and quoting revolutionary abolitionist David Walker made many controversial statements regarding social justice during her speech. Though, unsettling to the audience, she spoke from her devotion to justice and equality.



Ola Washington  
Ventura College Professor

Washington also earned a master's degree from UCSB in 1974, and did post-graduate work at UCLA, USC, and the University of Ibadan in Africa, all while being a single mother. Her career as a college professor at Ventura College began directly following her graduate studies. At Ventura College, she taught Early African American History, Modern African American History, Contemporary African American History, Early American History, and Modern American History. Her teaching legacy includes giving race relations lectures to employees of Ventura County agencies, businesses and other organizations as a part of IMPACT, a program started at Moorpark College designed to address changes brought about by Affirmative Action.

Teaching employees how to understand African Americans, many uninterested and held newspapers in front of their faces, "I jumped on the table and told the students, take a good look at me and tell me what you notice." They made observations regarding her colorful clothing, jewelry and then finally a student would respond "you are Black." "And that's what we are going to talk about today," she would respond. "They did not have to like it, but they learned to like me," Washington said referencing the lectures.

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**Chancellor Bernard Luskin receiving recognition as Founding President of Coastline Community College during its 40th year anniversary celebration.**

## Ola V. Washington

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By the time Washington finished teaching the courses she would notice students who entered the class with inherited prejudices would leave her class changed individuals with opened minds. "The key to my effectiveness is that all of my teachings come from the heart" she said. Today, Washington still teaches African American History courses that she fought to establish as a student more than 40 years ago.

Her many accomplishments include serving on the UCSB Alumni Board, founding Ebony House of Faith Institute, a community school and Agape House of Faith, a non-denominational church, acting as a guest speaker during Black History Month for the Oxnard Union High School District, teaching youth through the California Division of Juvenile Justice, previously known as California Youth Authority, becoming an ordained minister in 2007, authoring two books- "Return to the Homeland: Travels in Nigeria No Snakes, No Monkeys, No Apes" and "Infinity and Me," a book of poetry and verse, plus, being the matriarch to her children, grandchildren and extended family.

## Chancellor's Perspective continued from page 1

The College Promise Campaign, a national initiative established in 2015 under Civic Nation, a charitable and educational 501(c)(3) organization was headed by former Under Secretary of Education Martha Kanter, former community college chancellor, and Executive Director of the College Promise Campaign. In addition, Dr. Jill Biden, Honorary Chair of the College Promise Campaign, was instrumental in providing national visibility for the Promise.

The State of California Chancellor's Office requested \$15 million dollars to fund the "California College Promise Innovation Grant Program, funding grants to support community college districts establishing or expanding regional California College Promise Programs with the goal of increasing college preparation, college access, and college requirements."<sup>3</sup> With the intent to establish a District-wide College Promise, all VCCCD colleges, Moorpark, Oxnard, and Ventura, are collaborating to create a VCCCD application for the grant program to "support the improvement in successful student transition from high school to college."<sup>4</sup>

When it comes to serving the needs of our students at the Ventura County Community College District, we are dedicated to fulfilling our promises, literally and figuratively. The college promise campaign is now a nationwide effort. Congratulations to the men and women past and present championing the College Promise. They helped create the opportunities that now exist for students in the VCCCD and nationwide. We are joined together in recognizing African American History Month and Women's History Month – celebrating the tremendous contributions that each has made to our society, higher education institutions and to the success of our thousands of students.

<sup>1</sup> College Promise Campaign 2015-16 Annual Report. Retrieved February 2017.

<sup>2</sup> The White House (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/25/fact-sheet-white-house-launches-new-100-million-competition-expand>

<sup>3</sup> 2017-18 California Community Colleges System Budget Request (2016). Retrieved from [http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/ExecutiveOffice/Board/2016\\_agendas/September/Item-2.5-System-Budget-Request.pdf](http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/ExecutiveOffice/Board/2016_agendas/September/Item-2.5-System-Budget-Request.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ventura County Community College District (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.vcccd.edu/news/vcccd-2017-goals-include-district-wide-college-promise-program>

## Michelle Ascencion

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### On African American History Month....

**VCCCD:** Is there any historic person or figure in African American History that you look up to?

**MA:** Rosa Parks. *The fact that she didn't raise a fuss and she resisted while not being militant says a lot. She had a lot of strength, yet she was a quiet, obscure and humble person who was not afraid to stand up for what she believed in. She was not the type of person to just go with the program. I consider myself to be that way.*

**VCCCD:** What do you celebrate about African American culture and heritage? What do you celebrate about African Americans?

**MA:** *I appreciate our uniqueness. Everything about us is unique -- our hair, skin, creativity, innovation, and perspectives.*

**VCCCD:** Did you feel that race played a factor in the election?

**MA:** *I do not think my race or gender played a part in the election. People were picking the best person for the job and voting based on candidates' credentials. I'm very proud of Oxnard voters for not looking at race, but electing the most qualified candidate.*



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