



## OCC Foundation Receives \$9.44 Million Gift - the Largest in the College's History

The Orange Coast College Foundation has received the largest gift in the history of the College from an anonymous alumnus donor. The \$9.44 million gift will support students in OCC's Visual and Performing Arts programs.

"Investments like this one in our OCC arts students can have a profound impact on an institution like OCC," says OCC President Angelica Suarez. "Donors are recognizing that their investment in our community college can benefit a greater number of students compared to other sectors of higher education."

This gift will establish the OCC Endowment for the Arts, which will provide scholarships for students continuing their education at OCC or transferring to other institutions. The endowment fund will also support performance and exhibition opportunities for students in art, music, dance and drama.

"Gifts like these are transformational, for the student beneficiaries and for the College," says Orange Coast College Foundation Chairman Jeff Hyder. "We hope this gift will inspire other philanthropically motivated alumni and community members to support OCC."

Founded in 1985, the foundation currently has over \$60 million in assets and has a history of supporting a wide range of programs and activities on the 23,000-student campus.

## OCC Alumna Sylvia Mendez Inducted into OC Hall of Fame

Sylvia Mendez, an alumna of Orange Coast College and a dedicated civil rights activist, was inducted into the Orange County Hall of Fame on Dec. 10.

Mendez played an instrumental role in the groundbreaking Mendez et al. v. Westminster case. This triumph against racial segregation in California schools was a pivotal moment in the fight for civil rights. Mendez v. Westminster successfully ended de jure segregation in California, setting a precedent for the nation. The case was named after Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez, Sylvia Mendez's parents, who were at the forefront of the battle for equal education.

"Sylvia Mendez's recognition is especially significant as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the landmark Brown v. Board of Education ruling and the recent passage of AB 1805, which requires schools in California to teach the Mendez v. Westminster case," says OCC President Angelica Suarez. "Her lifelong dedication to civil rights and ongoing commitment to social justice align directly with the values of Orange Coast College."



Today, Mendez continues to share her story and discuss civil rights, including a notable return to OCC. She continues the legacy left by her parents by advocating for quality education and encouraging students to stay in school. She retired as a nurse after working more than 30 years in the field.

"Students need advocates because there's nothing that they can't do," Mendez shared. "I always tell them, you have to get an education. Anything you want to do, you can do it, but you just have to work at it and stick to it. And one of the best things is to get an education."

The 2024 OC Hall of Fame inductees also include 37th President of the United States Richard Nixon, Carl's Jr. founder Carl Karcher, Pick Up Stix founder Charlie Zhang, Orangewood Children's Home and Samaritan Boy's Center founder William Steiner, Wahoo's Fish Tacos founders Wing Lam and the Lee family, renowned guitar designer Leo Fender, and veterans advocates Ed Paul and Nick Berardino.

The OC Hall of Fame was created by the Orange County Board of Supervisors in 2023 to recognize individuals for achievements in civics, business, philanthropy, sports, music, arts and entertainment. Each year, the board creates a Hall of Fame Ad Hoc Committee to select its inductees.

Angelica Suarez. "Her lifelong dedication to civil rights and ongoing commitment to social justice align directly with the values of Orange Coast College and the California Community Colleges."

The Alumni Equity Champion Award recognizes outstanding alumni who have made a significant impact by advancing equity and inclusion. This prestigious honor celebrates individuals whose leadership, advocacy, or initiatives have fostered positive change, dismantled barriers, and empowered underserved communities, exemplifying the values of diversity and social justice upheld by California Community Colleges.

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Mendez earned an associate degree in nursing from Orange Coast College in 1964 and her bachelor of science degree in nursing from California State University, Los Angeles.



*~ You're invited ~*

Please join us for Orange Coast College's

## CHEMISTRY BUILDING RIBBON CUTTING & TOUR

FEB

20

10–11:30 a.m.

Program followed by ribbon cutting and tour.

Parking available in Lot H  
(Adams Ave. and Pinecreek Dr.)