Acknowledgements

Dr. Keith Curry, CEO
Dr. Stephanie Atkinson-Alston, Vice President
Dr. Chelvi Subramaniam, Student Success Dean
Dr. Donald Roach, Humanities & Math Chair

Humanities Faculty

Mr. Jose Bernaudo,
Reader & English Faculty
Mr. Domenic Capozzolo
Ms. Aurora Cortez-Perez
Ms. Judith Crozier
Dr. Roza Ekimyan
Ms. Amber Gillis,
Advisory Team Member & Faculty Member
Mr. Christopher Halligan
Ms. Jennifer Hill
Dr. Dalia Juarez
Ms. Shemiran Lazar
Mr. David Maruyama,
Reader & English Faculty
Mr. Patrick McLaughlin,
English Faculty Reader
Dr. Minodoro Moldoveanu
Mr. Thomas Norton
Ms. Jasmine Phillips
Ms. Liza Rios
Dr. Ruth Roach,
Publication Coordinator & English Faculty
Ms. Toni Wasserberger,
Reader & English Faculty
Ms. Nikki Williams
Dr. Valerie Woodward

Mr. Cleveland Palmer and Ms. Vanessa Madrid,
Contributors of Student Artwork

Mr. Junior Domingo, Student Development and Athletics
Mr. Christopher Perez, Student Activities Coordinator

&

Associated Student Body

Cover Artwork:
• Accordion • by Jordan Pace

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Prefatory Note

This edition of Voices of Compton: Compton Literary / Arts Journal is dedicated to piecing together the history of our beloved and beleaguered college district. We hope readers enjoy the journey through time from various voices. We think you will agree that the writers seemed to have a special passion that comes through in their writing and works in this volume. As readers will see, much research went into this edition, and many interviews were conducted. Readers will find it very informative. With news of reaccreditation in June 2017, our name is again Compton College. Happy 90th anniversary, Compton College!

-Humanities

Note: Cultural expressions are preserved as part of the art in some works. Also, artwork is photographed by students themselves or their professors. Finally, some pieces are done in MLA 7, others in MLA 8 as we transition to the new MLA format.

How You See It
by Tracy Jones

Ugly pretty black white short fat tall
Skinny brown pale hairy green-eyes red-head bald
What you see is what you get
You may not like them all
Tanned tall blond blue-eyes slender*
Model type of figure
May be eye candy to a shallow type of mister
Short round stubby personality bubbly
Might get compared to the teletubbies
PHD College degree six figure salary
May be all you have to offer
And never any sympathy
Cross-eyed big-feet disfigured body
Unibrow turkey-neck no-neck sloppy coockey
What you see is what you get
Which may not be for everybody
Rich gold glitter
Dull poor silver
Whatever makes your soul shiver….is BEAUTY
Amazing City and History

Pretty Shades of Brown by Jasmine Gill

the Gift! by Tiayona Myers

you Guide me..but you hurt me..I suffer daily..but you are one Treasure I can't control..sometimes the messages get a little fuzzy..but you never Misdirect me..even when it's drowning all in one moment..your Clarity relieves me..I battle with you just to go away sometimes, because I know they won't believe me..but you comfort me..reassuring with light beams that your Source will never leave me..even if they judge me..you should see the way they look at Me..

but as the time passes..they come back to let me know I was right..in public they despise me..but deep within they can't deny my Light..it shines through the darkest nights..many times I just wanna escape you with wine, but you only expose your Light more..reminding me that it will only open this Treasure to unseen forces, that you're trying so hard to protect me from..I ask God..why have you Chosen me to carry this weight..but its Messenger tells me to wait..you can never escape..you must instead Meditate in order to Elevate..

I'm surrounded by people..but with this Gift, I feel so alone..I can feel my Ancestors and loved Ones above pulling for me to tap into my inner Light, that was passed down to me long ago..their energy keeps me Strong, when I walk the path of the Chosen road..my movements are Bold, because Spiritually I am never alone..this Life has tried so hard to end Me, but with your help I never Fold..such a Blessing and a Curse to be young and have an Old Soul!!!

Compton: Shining Through the Darkness like a Beacon of Light by Brittney Ward

Compton, California: what does this place evoke? Many who haven’t stepped foot in or know a single soul from this city attribute it with having a negative connotation. Decades of gangs, violence, crime, and drugs seem to be the only aspects that receive media attention and validate public opinion. Contrary to popular belief, this great city exudes success and positivity through the business owners, professionals, celebrities, athletes, and scholars that call it their hometown. What are the rational, emotional, and ethical components that have made a lasting impression on Compton and in turn shaped public bias?

First, let’s briefly consider Compton and the surrounding Los Angeles areas’ history. Before the 1960s, these areas were flourishing with manufacturing jobs, beautiful homes, and a structured school system. The neighborhoods were inhabited exclusively by White Americans due to racially restrictive covenant deeds that kept African Americans and other non-White races from purchasing property. The idea of integrating meant tarnishing the community image and lowering the property value in the eyes of the homeowners. In 1948, these deeds were deemed illegal and unenforceable by the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Shelley vs. Kraemer (Garrison, par. 5).

White property developers thus saw an opportunity to turn a profit by creating affordable homes for middle class African Americans who desired to live in Compton. The ability of Blacks and Whites to co-exist in these neighborhoods lasted from 1952 up until the Watts riots in 1965. Beginning in the 1960s, South Central’s manufacturing firms began to relocate to suburban areas. By the 1970s, many of these firms were dissolved completely due to international competition. According to historian Josh Sides: “Most catastrophic was the sharp decline in blue-collar manufacturing jobs, the jobs that had been the foundation of black prosperity in the post war years” (Sides 171). Ultimately, the lasting effects of unemployment and lack of adequate education perpetuated poverty and crime.

Next, let’s reflect on the emotional factors that have affected Compton. The foundation of the public education system started out strong in California; it was ranked as one of the best school districts in the 1950s (Trei, par. 1). Tax payers help fund the schools in their communities, which left less affluent areas underfunded. In 1954, in the case of Brown v. Board of Education, the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation of schools was unconstitutional. Despite this, schools continued to be unintentionally segregated based on the demographics of a city or community. High unemployment rates and mediocre schools set the stage for discouraged Black youth’s allure of joining street gangs. Gangs initially starting in the 1940s as Blacks defending themselves
against segregationists. Gang membership exploded in 1969 due to the founding of the Crips of South Central and Bloods of Compton: “Coinciding, and undoubtedly fueled by, the decline in legitimate employment opportunities was the rise in black street gangs in Compton and throughout Los Angeles during the early 1970s” (Sides 593). Fast-forward to the 1980s drug epidemic, the lucrative sale of crack cocaine propagated gang violence, mass incarceration, and high mortality rates. Gang culture, drugs, crime, and violence have been detrimental to the well-being of Compton, and the long term effects linger in our present day.

Let’s examine some ethical factors that have influenced Compton and public bias. The Watts riots in 1965 and LA riots or the Rodney King riots of 1992 resulted from a culmination of systematic racism and police abuse of power and brutality against the Black community: “In the ’80s, the expanded war on drugs under President Reagan utilized prejudicial laws to hand out prison sentences that were more severe for crack than powder cocaine, the rich man’s high. LAPD Chief Daryl F. Gates’ military-style plan to shut down suspected rock houses was to literally rock them with motorized battering rams. When police destroyed the wrong homes (with women and children inside), he didn’t seem to give a s***. That same arrogance and abuse of power manifested itself in the 1991 beating of black motorist Rodney King, who had led L.A. cops on a high-speed chase. Segregation had been about drawing distinct lines and making sure that nonwhites ‘knew their place.’ So, when people of color disobey the law, the consequences are more severe. It’s about sending a message” (Alvarez, par. 3). The rap group known as N.W.A from Compton created music lyrics that put words to their experiences in Compton, positive influences, some historical events, and his personal involvement in the community. Judge Filer is a product of the Compton School system. His positive influences were Legrand Clegg, an attorney who encouraged him to get involved in politics, and the most influential, his father Maxey D. Filer who stressed the importance of “never, ever giving up” and to always help others in the community. He worked closely with the staff of Compton College and served three terms as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Compton Unified School District. He was hands-on with helping high school students choose Compton College. While growing up, he witnessed Compton making history by the election of the first Black mayor, Douglass Dollarhide, and succeeding him was the first black female mayor, Doris Davis. He also witnessed The Compton Invitational Relays, a major track and field event in the United States which was held on Compton College campus (Filer).

Let’s take a closer look at some of Judge Filer’s achievements. He graduated from Compton High School in 1973, and went to the University of Santa Cruz where he majored in politics and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1977. He went on to receive his Juris Doctorate degree from UC Berkeley in 1980. He began practicing law for two years as a Deputy State Public Defender in 1980. He argued and won a landmark case before the California Supreme Court, People v. Taylor (1982) 31 Cal.3d 488- a unanimous decision holding that criminal defendants have a right to wear civilian clothing--“the garb of innocence”-- during their trials. In 1982, he opened his own private law practice in Compton, California, and maintained a general criminal/civil practice with a focus on criminal defense work (Judge Kelvin D. Filer, Bio-Data, March 2017).

In closing, we have considered some factors that have influenced the city of Compton both adversely and positively. The negative effects of the early years in Compton’s history still affect the community in our present day. However, the focus should be on being proactive and changing these derogatory effects and public bias.

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Filer, Kelvin D. Personal interview. May 2017.

The Miseducation of Blacks in Compton: Good Things Do Come out of Bad Places
by Lina McAlister

Between 1940-1950, Compton was the suburb of hopes and dreams: a city with many opportunities, such as industrial plants, automobile and steel jobs, and affordable housing. Not to mention, during this time, Compton was racially White in 1940 and forbid that the city be integrated with African Americans. Blacks, however, eventually were allowed by law to buy property in Compton. Much like whites, blacks desired the American dream. Per Josh Sides, “As late as 1948, even as a wave of African American migrants flooded Los Angeles, Compton’s segregationists held the day: of a population of forty-five thousand fewer than fifty were African Americans” (2). However, as Blacks moved in with the same intentions as their white counterparts, the death of the suburban dream followed without delay. Nevertheless, don’t misunderstand: Compton’s troubled story of gang violence, poor education system, and drugs does not define the city’s legacy, for good things and admirable people do come from urban places.

Unfortunately, as African American working middle-class integrated into the city of Compton, whites couldn’t fathom the thought of having blacks as their neighbors and moved out. Sides asserts that “African Americans who represented 5 percent of Compton’s population in 1950, represented 40 percent by 1960” (p. 4). In other words, it was apparent at the rate of blacks moving into Compton, the city would soon be majority-minority. As the demographics changed, whites moved out and so did the opportunity for advancement. Furthermore, a city once filled with hopes and dreams took a turn for the worst. The parents of the youth of the 1960s and generations following did not have the same opportunities and resulted in a life of drugs and gangs. Sides acknowledges that “Compton became the epicenter of gang violence and has the greatest number of gangs of any city in Los Angeles County other than Los Angeles itself” (Sides 7). Clearly, the rise of deviance within the city of Compton was due to the lack of having equal opportunity and adequate resources.

Prior to 1960, the well-being of African American people in Compton was promising. Opportunity for good housing, jobs, clean neighborhoods, and good schools presented throughout the city. Although this may be true, in the mid-1960s, things in Compton took a spiraling turn downwards. The city’s employment rate dropped due to manufacturing companies closing and whites taking their businesses elsewhere. Additionally, Compton’s quality of education deteriorates along with the American suburban dream. Author of Death of a Suburban Dream, Emily Straus says, “Compton transitioned from a diverse working middle class community to a new form of American suburban life--fiscally troubled, undereducated, majority minority, struggling for survival” (Straus 111). To say the least, a handful of residents of Compton took more unconventional means to achieve their goals; robbing, stealing, and drug dealing became the demise of the city.

Through unyielding problems such as gangs and troubled school system, young Compton residents deserve a fair chance of judgment. The city of Compton has been ripped into shreds in the media and carries a bad reputation. It’s time to shed light on the positive things and great people who come from Compton, as well as people who defend the town and natives of the city. Social activist Dr. Joria Leap believes that “Compton is a vibrant marginalized, troubled, interesting community” (Viceland). People like Leap have hope for the city and the people within black suburbia. She understands the people there and has hope for their brighter futures, especially the youth. Centennial High School principal, Adams Robertson declares that “Our mission as a school is to insure all students are successful and college prepared and attempt to reach every student where their needs may be” (Viceland). Compton’s teachers believe in their students, and above all things, they, too, can achieve their goals in the same manner as their suburban counterparts. Principal Robertson continues, “We have to look at that every child has a gift, and it’s our job as educators to help students cultivate these gifts, so that they can pursue the American dream” (Viceland). For the most part, the American Dream currently is alive and well in the city of Compton.

Currently, the city of Compton has yielded several rap artists who have represented their city’s troubled times. Although rap artists like NWA (N***** with Attitudes), choice of lyrics is quite graphic, their accounts of growing up in Compton are a true reality of what the city had become at that time. In rap song, “Straight Outta Compton,” MC Ren raps:

See coz I’m the mutha***** Villain, the definition is clear, you’re the witness of a killin, that’s taking place without a clue and once you’re on the scope, your ass is through. Look, you might take it as a trip, but a n**** like Ren is on a gansta trip. Straight outta Compton... (NWA 1989).

The young rapper’s music depicted what was true reality for some within the city, but not true of all people living in Compton. NWA went onto make a host of other records about experiences growing up in the hood.
Their rap lyrics were a cry out for help within a broken community. Unfortunately, NWA put Compton on the map as this terrible place to be, but it wasn’t their intentions. Yet, media and people from other places manage to judge the city as a whole based on NWA’s accounts. In fact, per Sides, NWA was partially manufactured gangsters that came from working-middle class homes. On the other hand, more recently, rap artist Kendrick Lamar made it out of a city riddled with crime and chaos. Unlike the rap group NWA, Lamar’s reality growing up in Compton was different. He has a different perspective of Compton that he wants the world to know about. “You got cats (males from his neighborhood) out here trying to spark the idea of positivity in the community,” explains Lamar. While doing the interview, the key word Lamar says is “trying;” because there is so much negative rhetoric about the community, it overshadows the good doers. Lamar continues, “let me tell my story, let me tell the story of other cats that want to do something different but can’t because you are in an environment where you have to adapt” (Viceland). Ultimately, Lamar’s goal is to put in the universe, through his music, that there are people in Compton that want different than their sad realities. In rap song, “Blacker the Berry” Lamar expresses:

I'm African-American, I'm African, I'm black as the moon, heritage of a small village, Pardon my residence. Came from the bottom of mankind. My hair is nappy, my [penis] is big, my nose is round and wide. You hate me don't you? You hate my people; your plan is to terminate my culture. You're f*****' evil I want you to recognize that I'm a proud monkey. You vandalize my perception but can't take style from me. And this is more than confession. I mean I might press the button just so you know my discretion. I'm guardin' my feelins, I know that you feel it. You sabotage my community, makin' a killin'. You made me a killer, emancipation of a real n***. (Lamar 2015)

More importantly through his music he invites another side of the world to Compton to say, okay, these are people, proud people who want the world to look deeply into the reasons, problem, and solutions behind the madness while focusing on the positive.

Additionally, in efforts to shed light on positive people who come out of Compton’s troubled education system, I’d like to acknowledge Opal Williams, a former student at El Camino College Compton Center. She represents the college with great regard. Opal had several roles at the college. She was a student who worked with the Outreach and Student Transfer Department. Additionally, she was class president for two years between 2009-2011, and a Student Trustee on the Board of Compton Trustees. While attending the college, Williams acknowledges people who influenced her positively; “Dr. Ricky Shabazz (he was the Director of Outreach) and Dr. Keith Curry (he was the Dean but is now the Provost). They both had such a great influence on me.

Figure 1. Opal Williams (far left) being rewarded for her work in ASB. The association held events for the student body and staff.


All in all, Compton, at heart, is a good place where real people live. Nevertheless, the bad reputation Compton bears overshadows the positive aspirations and efforts of the people within the city. Thus, the negative stigma is glorified while good doers are left in the shadows. Meanwhile, former Compton city councilman Robert Adams defended
his city: “I’ve lived in Compton for 39 years, and I think Compton is one
the nicest cities around. We got first class citizens here, law-abiding
citizens.” “But,” he continued, “the majority of those citizens are black,
and you still have bigots out there” (Viceland). Admittedly, the city
doesn’t have aesthetic appeal. However, I like to look deeper as to why
the city is still like it is. What can we do to change the cycle of poverty,
gangs, and violence there? Overall, I like people to focus on the positive
things within the community and the successful people who come from
there. Aside from that, people are sensitive to the consequences of
erasing people, ethnicity, gender and race, yet we aren’t as careful
what we imply when we are simply referring to a place. Lastly, I leave
you with Lamar’s lyrics: “When you know, we been hurt, been down
before, n**** /When my pride was low, lookin’ at the world like, ‘where
do we go, n****? / And we hate Popo, wanna kill us dead in the street
for sure, n****/I’m at the preacher's door. My knees gettin' weak and my
gun might blow but we gon’ be alright” (Lamar, 2015). As I said, the city
of Compton is a very prudeful city where very prudeful people reside, who
deserve fair judgment. With great attention to the condition of the city
and more recourses for underserved communities, overall, Compton has
great potential.

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The Side of Compton People Don’t See
by Vanessa Hernandez
Because of the media, the city of Compton is known for gangs,
vioence, and brutality. News articles are being constantly written about
the death of a person, due to gang activity. Things like music and music
videos show gang activity and violence as what the city is all about.
There are movies that focus on the brutality that occurs in the city, both
in the cops and the resident’s point of view. All these things help keep
Compton’s image of a bad city to live in or visit because of the daily
trouble that occurs. However, the media fails to mention the good,
respectable side of Compton. Despite the known and criminal side of the
city, Compton is a great city with a lot of history and a lot of pride. In

this paper, I will be discussing Compton’s history, its focus on education,
and what people raised in this city grow up to be to show a side of
Compton that the media doesn’t recognize.

Compton wasn’t always known as the city full of gangs and
violence. When the city was first built in 1866, it was considered a
farming town. Residents grew corn, pumpkins, alfalfa. They raised
poultry, produced dairy products, and more. The farming made the town
a lovely, peaceful place, one where people could bring their families to
live. The city was recognized as a great farming area full of friendly
people and neighbors. Compton had this reputation for a long time. At
the time, mostly farmers lived in the area. It wasn’t until 1887, when
Compton become a home to many working-class residents.

According to Emily Straus, Compton bordered Los Angeles and
Long Beach, which were the two largest cities that offered jobs in Los
Angeles County. Because of this, “it became an affordable place to live
for those who worked elsewhere” (Straus 19). Many people of different
colors living in Compton for work caused the city many racial
problems and riots, yet residents never lost touch of what they truly
wanted for their city and their children, which was a good education for the future
generations.

Despite differences in races, backgrounds, and cultures,
residents of Compton were similar in that parents wanted their children
to get good educations: “A community’s children are by and large its
next generation of adults, and thus school quality has a dramatic long-
term impact on a community’s overall well-being” (Straus 11). “Comptonites,” as Straus
calls Compton residents, know that for their
city to evolve and improve, their children must get a good education in
good schools (Straus 5). However, Compton schools didn’t always get
enough funding. This caused students to fall behind in their education,
which meant that Compton schools were failing the city’s children. Not
accepting the way the schools educated their children, Compton parents
began to fight for their children’s education and its environment.

Schools weren’t getting enough funding to hire great teachers
and buy new books. The few books the schools had, they had to be
shared by more than one student. This, along with other reasons, caused
students to fail courses, drop out of school, as well as not go to school at
all. This led to a non-profit corporation called the Compton Education
Foundation (CEF), whose main focus is to raise funds for Compton
schools. Francis Taylor, author of “Education Is a Priority”, says that
“CEF envisions Compton as a cultural Mecca and supports programs and
services in three core areas: visual and performing arts, athletics and
wellness, and advanced learning” (Taylor, para. 4). With CEF’s help,
Compton schools and its students have improved over the years. The
schools improved more with help from members of the school board.
School board members had a role to play in improving Compton schools, as well. It is on them to make policy decisions and more that help schools meet students and parents’ needs. Lynn Dymally was a school board member in the Compton Unified School District from 1982-1992. Throughout those ten years, Dymally said she stayed because of her “commitment to public service and education” (Dymally). Sometimes she would succeed in her goals, although meetings would get intense at times. She used the words “negative, heated, angry, yelling, shouting, and name calling” to describe the school board meetings. However, she stayed in the job trying to make a difference for Compton schools. Both CEF and school board members, like Dymally, have not only helped the city with children’s education, they have also helped students care more deeply for their city and their homes. This means not fitting into the stereotypes others have of people from Compton.

Although there are people who fit into Compton’s stereotypes, there are others in this city who don’t. I read an article, “Compton Student Inspires Others,” by Tasia Smith, that is about a student who shared his scholarship money with all the other contestants of a free-throw competition. A man named Court Crandall created the competition so that students could have the opportunity to get excited about college and go to one: “Crandall wanted to help retool the public image of a city that, although historically dragged down by gang violence and corruption, has made serious improvements during the past 20 years” (Smith, para. 4). Crandall’s purpose with this competition was to show people who lived outside of Compton that people from Compton aren’t just about gangs and violence. There are people who care about their education and their futures. The student who won, Allan Guei, knew what an opportunity it was to go to college, so he decided to split his $40,000 scholarship with the others. This is just one example of a person who comes from Compton and doesn’t fit into stereotypes.

Many people believe that growing up in Compton means being in a gang and having a criminal record, but that is not true. The residents focus on moving past those stereotypes and creating a new city full of inspiration. In the article, “Compton Stereotypes Unjustified, Ignorant,” Edward writes about the people that do their best to succeed and not be another stereotype. These people don’t want to continue being the same as what others know Comptonites to be like. He claims the students care about their city and are tired of it being known as a city of violence. After working with some of the Compton students, Edward writes:

All the students had big dreams, from becoming neurologists to engineers to pediatricians. The one thing that intrigued me was that all of them wanted to give back to their community in one shape or form. They felt very connected and committed to Compton. Although so many people stereotyped the Compton students and residents, these students work hard daily in the community and in school, giving back to the community by being role models for the younger generation. They are living daily to break through the labels and stereotypes while educating the real ignorance that exists. (para. 4)

They want their city to, once again, be known as a place where families can move to, not just because of the low-cost, but because it’s a great community. To residents of the city, Compton is a great community where children can play outside and get a good education. While outsiders don’t have many expectations for them, Compton residents have their own expectations for their city and their schools that they make sure are met.

Although the media creates an image of Compton as violent, gang activity, and brutality and corruption, the city is a great home to many people. People who live outside of Compton only believe the stereotypes because they never experienced a life in that community. However, to Comptonites, this city is full of people who are hard-working, caring, and ambitious to get to a better life. Music, music videos, movies, and the news show one side of Compton that isn’t always true. People who live in Compton care about their education, grow up to care about their city, and want their city to be a wonderful place for families to live, like it was when it was still a farming town. Not everyone who is straight out of Compton grows up to be criminals or gang members. In the end, “Because of that talent, and Guei's superb character, the contest morphed into a testament to the kind of students who really come out of Compton: intelligent, talented, driven, and, above all, compassionate” (Smith, para. 7).

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survive because of the resiliency of its residents, who refuse to abandon their city. People like Lynn Dymally, a retired member of the school board, have been fighting for the well-being of the people, determined to disprove the city’s crumbling reputation to create a better life for its residents. On the other hand, change cannot be fully implemented without external awareness and support, thereby leaving the city in a struggle for accomplishment while being held back by a lack of assistance and an unmanageable amount of problems. Compton’s potential to be a flourishing suburb is being hindered by its financial burdens, flaws in its educational system, racial division, and violence.

First and foremost, Compton’s rocky history paved the way to the difficulties the city is currently facing. Unresolved issues from the past century have left current residents and administrators of Compton to juggle contentions of the past with modern-day struggles. These conflicts largely stem from racial issues that characterized the twentieth century. Because of the 1948 *Kelley v. Kraemer* and 1953 *Barrows v. Jackson* Supreme Court decisions, which sought to end oppression found in racial laws, Compton’s population saw an increase of African Americans during the 1950s (Strauss 74). These people were ready to take hold of opportunities that had long eluded their eager hands: moving into the suburb was a symbol of overcoming injustice. According to an article by Josh Sides, during the Watts Riots of 1965, “white-owned business abandoned Compton and deindustrialization struck the region, destroying the union manufacturing jobs that underwrote the prosperity of Compton residents” (Sides 1). This proves that the city’s current economic struggles are consequences of the exodus of whites and the businesses and investment they took with them. In her book *Taught by America: A Story of Struggle and Hope in Compton*, Sarah Sentilles states that “corruption and greed lead to calculated decisions that” leave cities like Compton hurting for resources and support, simply because of their racial make-up (Sentilles 190). Essentially, the racial discrimination of the past century instigated the economic and structural inadequacies of Compton today, leaving current city officials and residents to deal with problems they are not entirely responsible for.

As a result, the city’s potential for greatness is not financially supported. Compton is so consumed with producing the bare minimum for its population that it cannot make much-needed improvements for its people. To begin with, “Compton’s debt became so overwhelming that, by March 1993, the district could neither pay its teachers for the rest of the school year nor afford to open the schools in the fall” (Strauss 2). This is a horrendous fact to consider, as the lives of Compton’s youth were being endangered by unstable economics. Consequently, the district made a plea for state intervention in 1992 and went into receivership, which Lynn Dymally, an African American member of the school board at the time, helped to orchestrate (Dymally). Though this was a tumultuous time for the district, advocates like Dymally fought long and hard for the students of Compton, providing them with opportunities through education. Additionally, the suburb is clearly “struggling with crime, racial change, and poverty”, making Compton extremely unattractive for investors (Strauss 156). The lack of economic support leads to many consequences: Firstly, new infrastructure, which would greatly benefit Compton’s residents, will be a challenge to complete. Secondly, Compton will be left to crumble, allowing for the continuation of violence and the city’s financial struggles. Lastly, and probably most importantly, Compton’s reputation as a poverty-stricken suburb will be perpetuated and further solidified into reality. To combat these daunting consequences, Compton has made a few, hard-fought changes that have instilled hope in the population. Jones says that residents have “hope in the new businesses cropping up along Compton Boulevard, the city’s main commercial strip, and the new housing developments on lots where apartment buildings had been allowed to deteriorate” (Jones 1). Positive steps forward spark optimism in Compton’s future, calling for more residents to fight for their city. However, in order to take more steps to a positive financial future, Compton needs external support.

Furthermore, personal incomes of Compton reflect the city’s need for help and change. Jones states: “less than 3.5% of the households in Compton-- a city of 92,000... earn more than $50,000” (Jones 1). This shows that a majority of Compton’s population is financially struggling, somewhat mimicking their city’s economic situation. Moreover, “in 2000, twenty-eight percent of the residents lived below the poverty line, double California’s 14.2 percent and more than twice the national 12.4 percent” (Strauss 8). This is a startling demographic that epitomizes the true severity of the suburb’s situation. Additionally, when Sentilles visits one of her student’s family, which is made up of five people, she finds that they “lived in the garage at the end of the driveway. The garage had been converted into a duplex, and they lived in one-half of this” (Sentilles 122). These appalling living standards are somewhat normal for Compton, as residents’ minimal education leads to a minimal income and the subsequent struggles that result from a small paycheck. These economic downfalls are particularly harmful to children: “He was so skinny his stomach felt concave. He started to cry, bending over in pain” (Sentilles 118). There are youth in Compton who are malnourished, starving because of lack of income. It is evident that the startlingly low incomes of Compton, and its subsequent consequences, are desperate cries for help that, for the most part, are going unheard.

Next comes education: Compton’s floundering school district is failing its students, who are filled with talent and the desire to succeed. Firstly, the educational system is understaffed. Sentilles states: “There was usually only one teacher – possibly two – in charge of over three hundred bored, angry, scared children” (Sentilles 52). Because of the
district’s crippled budget, very few staff are responsible for the students and their welfare, leaving children improperly taught and cared for. Secondly, schools are led by questionable authority. One book says the principal of Madison Elementary, a primary school in Compton, was so hated that she “needed a police escort from her office to her parked car every day after school” (Sentilles 38). People who are unfit for leadership roles are being made responsible for creating the future, a formidable situation that will have far-reaching ramifications. A horrifying example of the incompetence of the district is Centennial High School: “In 1989, Centennial High School enrolled 1,489 students but graduated only 258” (Strauss 173). It is easier to let these students fail than to see them through to success. However, this hasn’t always been the case. People like Lynn Dymally, “who have a commitment to public service and education” stand their ground and relentlessly advocate for the students who depend on them for support (Dymally). Charles S. Lee and Lester Sloan claim that “the bitterest battles have been fought over Compton’s schools,” proving that some authority figures will not stand by while students’ futures are unfairly compromised (Lee and Sloan 2). For example, Aja Brown, the current mayor of Compton, has helped to remedy the city’s extremely high truancy rates: “In 2013, the district achieved a 1.47% increase in daily attendance… leading to an increase of two million dollars in state funding for the district” (Brown 3). These achievements confirm that positive change can be made and implemented to benefit the Compton community as a whole. Arguably, Compton’s educational system is the city’s greatest letdown, but perhaps it is also the city’s greatest source of hope. Sentilles says that “the students respond to the violence of their environment with hope, love, and incredible resilience,” proving that children are the most unshakeable champions of a bright future (Sentilles 77-78). In her book, Sentilles describes many students who were extremely talented and intelligent, but couldn’t build upon their gifts because of the faults in the school system. It is time that the students’ optimism and strength are matched by the district’s desire to create a legacy capable of overcoming Compton’s current struggles.

At the same time, conflict at home and within families are further negatively impacting the city’s youth. It is common for children to come from broken families, with important figures, such as mothers or fathers, absent from their lives. Strauss says that family members could be in prison or could have died from violent crime, leaving behind economically strained spouses responsible for raising children on their own (Strauss 222). This creates an unstable environment for an innocent child to grow up in; they are acquainted with mature themes early in life, involuntarily throwing away their childhood for a reality too gruesome for young hearts. For instance, a teacher, Ms. Sentilles, relays her experience with domestic violence: “I then watched as her mother lifted her arm high in the air and brought it down quickly and slapped Eva’s face” (Sentilles 94). When children are subjected to this kind of violence on a regular basis, their psyche and self-esteem can be severely affected. A survey conducted on Madison Elementary School students, aged five to ten, states that “Fifty-three percent of the students here say they hate themselves” (Sentilles 176). This is an appalling statistic to hear, as children, not even prepubescent teens, are already dealing with complex feelings of self-hatred derived from unhealthy home-life. The students’ self-loathing will have repercussions that extend far into their adolescence and adulthood. This could partially explain why generation after generation, Compton has not been able to rectify the brokenness of their community, for the individuals themselves are suffering from unresolved psychological hurt from their own environment. Children seem to be at the bottom of the food chain, fed upon, stepped on, or forgotten by their parents, teachers, and ultimately their environment. These children need change more than any other individuals in Compton.

On the other hand, racial divisions between Latinos and African Americans are creating more chaos for the city, affecting multiple structures within Compton. As aforementioned, Compton became an African American city ready to claim their own lives as middle-class, but because of the recent influx of immigrants in the 1990s, the city has become predominately Latino (Strauss 6). This change has occurred recently, as Lynn Dymally, who left the district in 1992, described the campuses to be seventy-five percent African American and twenty-five percent Latino. As a result, this city is largely inhabited by minorities who have, unfortunately, developed tedious and unfriendly relations. This stems from political dispute as “Blacks hold most political positions in Compton, and Hispanics, who are now a majority, claim a pattern of discrimination” (Lee and Sloan 3). It seems that patterns of discrimination from America’s not so distant past have begun to repeat themselves between minorities. Consequently, the local city government has been pressured to resolve the plea from Latinos for equal treatment and representation. Lee and Sloan also report that despite making up “for more than half the city’s 91,600 residents, no Latino has ever held a seat on the city council. The 127-member police force only has fourteen Latino officers” (Lee and Sloan 1). It is evident that the Latino population has not been able to achieve leadership roles, and Compton is potentially suffering because of it. Racial relations were further devastated with the passage of Proposition 187, which kept illegal immigrants “from receiving state-funded human, health, social, and education resources and services” (Strauss 199-200). Compton was once a place of possibility for those seeking opportunity and personal success. However, these aspirations were dampened with the adoption of policies that limited Latinos and further enabled African Americans. Moreover, discrimination has been found within the district: “The politics of
Compton Unified brought to the forefront tensions between blacks and Latinos” (Strauss 199). Once again, this is a call for Compton to change its corrupt ways to unlock a positive future for its whole population, not just one demographic. By giving Latinos a voice, racially charged violence could be avoided, and Compton could become a place where minorities thrive together, instead of separately.

Regrettably, Compton is infamous for its crime and violence, which has stark repercussions on the city’s inhabitants. Jones states: “Violence is an almost daily fact of life, so much so that it seems most outsiders have come to equate Compton with gang members” (Jones 1). This violence obscures the true image of Compton, scaring away outsiders from seeing the brave resiliency that characterizes its population. Additionally, Compton’s “poverty also created incentives for inner-city residents to participate in the informal economy… In particular, the drug business grew” (Strauss 205). The city’s financial instability, coupled with its lack of investment or external support, essentially enabled the influx of illegal capital because Compton was unable to properly sustain its residents. Sides states: “In the 1980s, Compton, California, became a national symbol of gang violence despair in urban black communities, but this image obscures a rich history of African American aspiration and success” (Sides 1). Despite all the violence and corruption in Compton, the suburb is proof that African Americans can overcome racism and take on leadership roles within their own communities, just like Lynn Dymally. Compton is a symbol of hope and accomplishment for minorities nationwide. With increased investment, Compton could further inspire its residents and minorities beyond its borders to fight for positive changes within their lives.

Compton is a suburb held together by a single thread called hope. Empowering the city’s residents through positive change and external support will help to weave together the broken pieces to create a unified city. Compton hasn’t completely succumbed to corruption because its residents, such as Lynn Dymally, have poured their lives and their faith into the community. Indeed, “The Compton I experienced… was a neighborhood of hardworking people struggling to make it, of six-and seven-year-olds and the families who loved them” (Sentilles 71). The children of Compton show incredible strength and commitment to change, which could easily be turned into reality in their near futures. Beneath its rough exterior, Compton holds incredible potential for achievement that, through raised awareness, external support, and internal change, could be fully realized nationwide. Ultimately, the residents’ faith in, and hope for, Compton are catalysts for a positive change necessary in creating a revamped reputation for the city, as well as a positive, opportunity-filled future for its population.

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**Compton from the Ground Up**

*by Joshua Lozano*

Every day, thousands of Americans walk the streets of Compton with a sense of pride, knowing they grew up in a city full of rich history and intriguing personalities within every individual. A little history of when it was discovered was when it was settled by a small group of only 30 pioneer families who saw a future in the land in the year of 1867, but was later officialized and incorporated in May 11, 1888, with a steady population of 500 people with its first council meeting held three days later, the 14th of May. Throughout the years, there have been many ups and downs that have made Compton the great city that it is known for today. Diversity, education, and agriculture are a few words that can be used to describe such a city that came from nothing to outstanding accomplishments and persevering people who never gave up. Not to mention the hardships the town had to endure for many years, for instance, the water dilemma and the massive earthquake that left people scared. Despite the fact that Compton has made a great amount of progress, many people still associate Compton in a negative way. No land is ever perfect without inevitable obstacles, and Compton as far as the city’s people know, is not done growing.

Ethnicity and diversity are factors in the Compton growing era in which numbers and percentages bounced back and forth between whites, African-Americans, Latinos, and other smaller minorities. This is not to mention age groups also had a shift in the matter of who lived there. According to the book “*Compton: A Community in Transition,*” by Franklin, he states:
In the last decade, the total population of Compton City has shown a healthy 49.6% gain, growing from 47,991 to 71,812. The more striking fact, however, is the change in ethnicity during this period. In the 1950s, the non-white population consisted 4.8% of the total; this proportion increased to 10.4% in 1952; to 17.1% in 1955, and finally to 40.1% in 1960. In this period 1955-1960, white population declined by 18.5%, while the non-white population increased by 165%. The segment of the population under 20 years of age grew from 20,095 in 1950 to 31,541 in 1960, an increase of 54.9%. But whereas in 1950 the proportion of non-white youth was less than 2%, by 1960 it had risen to 20.6%, almost equaling the proportion of Caucasian youth in the Compton population (23.3%).

This statement is giving us a rough but fairly accurate number percentage of what ethnicities lived there and what their ages were from about 1955-1960. From what it shows, the population did grow almost by 50% while at the same time, the white population was declining as African Americans and Latinos were taking more of the land. The youth population was also growing at a fast rate, assuming there were a lot of families starting their lives at that point. Just like the population regarding nationalities, in age groups, the white youth was less than 2%.

Education and the building of schools were some of the many signs that indicated Compton was going in the right direction, starting from the development of a public-school in the main City of Compton, where a system that really enforced school learning for children living in the Compton area was established throughout the years. The public-schools at Compton were such a big deal that not only did residents of the City of Compton attend them, but also many neighboring communities would travel from local farms to be taught in Compton’s schools. In the book of Images of America: Compton, by Robert Lee Johnson, we are able to get a little more information on the first schools that were made in Compton:

The construction of the first elementary school building took place in July 1868 on the corner of what is now Alondra Boulevard and Willowbrook Avenue. Then in August 1871, construction of a two-story grammar school building was completed just north of what is now Willowbrook Avenue and Compton Boulevard. Later in September 1891, ninth-grade instruction began at the school.

With the introduction of schools and an education system, the City of Compton was pronounced as one of the few cities with an “organized school district” (Johnson 39).

Water is a necessity for just about everything human beings do or need, including growing crops, showering, cleaning, drinking and more. In Compton, having water flow from rivers was both a blessing and a curse: “It’s great for farmers except when it would actually flood. Roads, barns, and even homes could be washed away in the floodwaters” (Johnson 51). This gamble was hard to maintain because nature is ever changing, leaving the town of Compton but one option: enduring. Now agriculture has grown a lot since 1888, when Griffith Compton (the owner of the land) decided to donate the land in exchange for a favor. The favor, of course, was that that land will always be sectioned off and used for agricultural use only. Years later, we now have Compton with Richland Farms filled with chickens, cows, goats and any other animal you can think of: “You’re more likely to hear roosters crowing than the bark of a 9 mm” (NPR Staff, 2011).

An unfortunate event happened in March 10, 1933: an earthquake. This 6.4 earthquake gave the residents of Compton a real scare. With an earthquake so massive, and without the newer modern technology, we have now to help mitigate the effects caused Compton to lose several buildings in a 3-block radius. Not only was this tragedy a disaster, the school, a place Compton was awarded for being excellent, was also severely destroyed. Luckily, “if the earthquake struck a few hours earlier when school was in session, the amount of tragedies would have been tremendous” (Johnson 65). Even though that was the case, a total of 120 people lost their lives that day, 15 being from Compton.

Crime in relation to Compton has never been that great in terms of how high it is, compared to any other city. An article from Humanities from Stanford says, “Although there are in fact gangs in Compton, it is still fundamentally the community I remember, a city populated by hard working people reaching for a modern-day version of what we commonly refer to as the American dream.” Crime has now more than doubled from the past decades due to low income families and scarce resources leaving many no option on doing anything other than surviving. For the everyday person who just happens to be in Compton, they most likely won’t encounter any type of crime directly: “The Compton I knew as a small child was predominantly white except for the Mexican barrio where I was born. However, by that time I finished middle school in 1963, the city was divided into the West side, overwhelmingly black, and the east side, predominantly white” (Humanities from Stanford, 2009). Now more than ever, Compton is a well-known city across states, due to many popular rappers being born and brought up there and introducing the word Compton in the lyrics.

Fast forward a few decades ahead and Compton is now drawing attention from many new home buyers: “Compton’s easy accessibility to and from five freeways and the affordability of its housing has drawn additional residents and sparked the interest of developers” (City of Compton). Compton is a city of growth, a city that will prosper through the years, changing for the better of the communities, a place where residents can be proud of living in a city that started from nothing to a
well-known place. Whether you live here, or are a neighbor to the city, you can appreciate the city’s history and understand how far it has come.

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**Compton: Giving Back to the Community by LaQoia Thompson**

The community of Compton, CA, has faced many hardships throughout the years; however, there is hope for a better future thanks to many influential individuals who give back to their community in hopes to make it safer for today’s youth. Compton was not always a poor city crawling with gang members, weapons, drugs, and racial tension. Over a century ago, the city was discovered by settlers, a group of thirty pioneering families. For decades, Compton flourished as a wealthy suburb that was dominated by white residents. Currently, Compton is known for its gang violence, high racial statistics for blacks and Hispanics, and the bitter racial tension between the two minority groups. However, through the tensions and bitter rivalry lies a Compton that most tend to ignore. A Compton that harbored some of the influential people seen in the media today, these people currently fight to help make their city better for the next generation and the generations to come.

Compton, CA, was first discovered and settled in 1867 by thirty pioneering families led by a man named Griffith Dickenson Compton. These settlers faced many hardships with this new land, such as floods, cold weather, heavy rain, and rising waters that forced the families to move to higher grounds. A year later, 1868, the settlers began to look towards the future of their city by building schools. These schools not only served as teaching grounds, but they were also used for church and civic gatherings. The settlement was finally named Compton during the year 1869. In the year 1887, the settlers wanted to improve their local government. For months, they discussed incorporation: “In January 1888, they forwarded a petition supporting the incorporation of Compton to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, who in turn forwarded the petition to the State Legislature” (History). Compton was officially incorporated into the Los Angeles County on May 11, 1888.

As the decades passed, the quiet suburb of Compton continued to be dominated by the white population, leaving only a small amount of whiteness-of-compton-was-defended-vehemently. As the decades passed, the quiet suburb of Compton continued to be dominated by the white population, leaving only a small amount of whiteness-of-compton-was-defended-vehemently. As the decades passed, the quiet suburb of Compton continued to be dominated by the white population, leaving only a small amount of whiteness-of-compton-was-defended-vehemently. As the decades passed, the quiet suburb of Compton continued to be dominated by the white population, leaving only a small amount of whiteness-of-compton-was-defended-vehemently. As the decades passed, the quiet suburb of Compton continued to be dominated by the white population, leaving only a small amount of whiteness-of-compton-was-defended-vehemently. As the decades passed, the quiet suburb of Compton continued to be dominated by the white population, leaving only a small amount of whiteness-of-compton-was-defended-vehemently. As the decades passed, the quiet suburb of Compton continued to be dominated by the white population, leaving only a small amount of whiteness-of-compton-was-defended-vehemently. As the decades passed, the quiet suburb of Compton continued to be dominated by the white population, leaving only a small amount of whiteness-of-compton-was-defended-vehemently. As the decades passed, the quiet suburb of Compton continued to be dominated by the white population, leaving only a small amount of whiteness-of-compton-was-defended-vehemently.
earnings back into the city. As mentioned earlier in the paragraph above, rappers touch on situations going on in Compton that other communities try to ignore. For example: A rap group known as the N.W.A. released a song about the struggles between individuals in the community and the police. They described how the police racially profile individuals and the brutal force they use against members of the community. Besides the truthful raps spoken in their albums, many rappers give back to their community, two of them being Dr. Dre and Kendrick Lamar. Dr. Dre announced, in 2015, his plans to open a performing arts center in Compton. He is teaming up with the Mayor of Compton, Aja Brown, to help keep children and teenagers off the streets in order to keep them away from gangs. Aja Brown stated, “He clearly has a heart for Compton, especially our youth…this performing arts center will provide a pathway for creative expression, exposure and training to the myriad of industries…while providing a much-needed safe haven for our youth” (Panzar). Dr. Dre is using some of the royalties from the movie, Straight Outta Compton and all of the royalties from his latest album entitled, Compton, to fund this project. Another rapper, Kendrick Lamar is a familiar face in the Compton community, who is actively trying his hardest to help create a brighter future for the youth of Compton. In Forest Park’s article, he talks about the young rapper’s donations, “…giving back to his community that raised him. He has personally donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to support sports programs, after school programs, music programs in the Compton Unified School District to help keep Compton students off the streets and in the classroom” (Parks). Kendrick Lamar hopes to stimulate children’s minds and nurture their hidden talents in order to keep them on the path to brighter futures, not only for themselves, but the community as a whole.

Although Compton is known for its appreciative rappers and racial tensions, there is another side to Compton that outsiders do not always know about or tend to ignore. Compton is one of the oldest cities in the United States. The former suburb was once residence to the former presidential family, the Bush family. Compton is, also, a great entrepreneurial hot spot. If someone wants to open a business, Compton would be one of the best locations to open its doors. Compton is residence to many influential and inspirational people of different backgrounds and talents. Venus and Serena Williams, two sisters who are champion tennis players. Anthony Anderson, a well-known actor and comedian. Robin Coste Lewis, a poet who most is known for her book of poetry entitled Voyage of the Saddle Venus. Finally, Sergio Pinales a champion cricket player who currently resides in Compton.

Venus and Serena Williams experienced both the good and the bad Compton had to offer. As told by Serena, Venus was the first sister to learn tennis at a local Compton park, but the constant gang activity and outright disrespect caused her father to look elsewhere for training. Venus and Serena Williams had an older sister named Yetunde Price, who lived in Compton. In 2003, Price died in a drive-by shooting. She was a registered nurse and a mother of three boys. The sisters wanted to do something for Compton in order to uplift its image: “Williams stated that herself and her sister wanted to help give back to the community in a way that would lift it up and help others understand that Compton is a great place to be” (Paisner 101). The Williams Sisters wanted to open a resource center to provide a safe community for residents who need assistance with mental and emotional struggles. In 2015, the sisters opened a community center in the memory of their late sister, The Yetunde Price Resource Center. Victims of violence and trauma will be able to seek help at this center. The center is estimated to see about 50 clients per month. The project is deemed to be a great success, “This is an incredible investment and commitment by Serena and Venus Williams, and I commend them for their desire to help children and families in Compton thrive” (Ellise). This center is looking to better the city and help victims of violence.

Sergio Pinales is a well-known cricket player, who plays and helps teach at the Compton Cricket Club. Sergio’s mother talks about the effect cricket has had on her son, “Thanks to cricket, her son became a new kind of Compton star, and achieved something she could never have imagined. “Who has the opportunity to have tea with Prince Edward?” she asks. ‘Or get a tour of the Palace?’” (Pinales). The cricket player explains his life in Compton and the difference between himself and the image of people from his community. He describes the many instances in which Compton residents are seen as advocates for gangster rap, whereas he preferred to listen to classical music. Growing up, he looked up to pianists and cricket players. Pinales talks about his and the Compton seen in the media, the “odd collision with the Compton you know and the Compton you don’t…his jovial voice narrates…including different cricket practice fields as well as dividing lines, including one intersection... ‘that actually separates the Bloods from the Crips’” (Pinales). Pinales shows the interviewer an actual intersection in Compton that separates Blood territory from Crip territory.

Compton, a city crowded with gang violence and racial tensions, is given hope and a second chance because of the amazing people that give back to the community in order to build it up and protect the youth. Dr. Dre is opening a performing arts center to help articulate the importance of staying active in the community to the younger generations. Venus and Serena Williams opened the Yetunde Price Resource Centers in hopes to help victims of violence and trauma. Kendrick Lamar donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to after-school programs in order to keep kids off the streets. Sergio Pinales teaches at the Compton Cricket Club and shows young children that there is always another way to live their lives and that it’s okay to be different.
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Compton’s Graduates
by Bertha Navarro
Talent Books and scholars
Striving to be the best to Graduate with Honors
Although life’s a mess, stressed out y desvelado
Hiding silent screams for help behind that smile
There ain’t no short cuts or cheating to life’s blessings
Our hard work finally paying off after all the sacrificing
Quit the worrying, stop the crying; may not be easy but,
Keep determined; a hard-worker
There may be a bumpy road up ahead, but nothing you can’t conquer
Keep dreaming make it a reality cuz life is limited
Get up it’s time to claim your profession

Voices Around Campus Today

Compton: The Annaruth Way
by Aubrey Blake
As a student, she was a top scholar, as a teacher she was the who’s who and as an academic senator she is the go to woman, but as a person Annaruth Garcia is a radiant bright star with much experience, a great work ethic, and a grand personality. She is a shining example of hard work paying off and loving what you do shining through in your work.

Ravaged by drugs, gang violence and a broken system, the city of Compton was in shambles in 1990. Though the major crime rate went down from the previous year, it was still higher than the national average. President George H.W. Bush was in office and continuing to wage the war on drugs like President Reagan before him. Compton was a rough and rugged place to be in 1990, but not for Annaruth Garcia.

Annaruth Garcia started at Compton College in 1990 as a young bright student ready to begin a new educational chapter in her life. She was excited to learn and further her education through Compton College. She attended class every day, eager to learn more, and wanting to leave the campus with more knowledge than she started the day with. As a student, Annaruth enjoyed the freedom on campus as a young woman coming up in Compton, California, in the 1990s. She wanted to start school because she said, “it was the best thing for me to further my education” (Garcia). As a full time student, Annaruth also worked a full time job. I asked her about the level of difficulty and the hardships that may have caused, and her response was “that was what I had to do, so it wasn’t hard. It is what had to be done” (Garcia). To me, that is what represents her character and excellence to the fullest extent. I guarantee if
that were me, I would have complained every day and eventually quit either school or work or both.

To think that someone could be so motivated to succeed when every time you walk outside you see despair and hopelessness, to be so motivated and steadfast to be the change and not be a part of the problem. It was a long road ahead for a better education, but Annaruth was up for the task and kept it going despite all the challenges and obstacles her surrounding environment threw her way. Living in Compton in 1990 was something, but making something of yourself is an accomplishment that very few people who grew up in and still remain in Compton have achieved.

In sitting down and talking with her, I personally saw how serious and dedicated she was to education and schooling, so her working at the school she would earn a degree from wasn’t a big shock to me. After getting her Bachelors in Business, she got her Masters in Business Administration and Technology from the University of Phoenix. She did not achieve these great successes alone. She had a great support system from many people, one of the first people being Ruth Dorsey. She was the business department chairperson. Ms. Ruth told Annaruth on one of the first days she started school that she was going to succeed; she saw something in her that prompted her to say that, and Annaruth used those kind words as motivation to keep going and continue on the right path to a higher education. Another person who helped her was Dovard Ross, and he was a great source of strength through her time at the University of Phoenix. She said he was always there to encourage and motivate Annaruth through whatever hardship she faced. It is important to have a good community of people to lean on, no matter what you go through, and Annaruth had amazing support to back her up.

Knowing that a good support system is the key to a striving scholar’s success Annaruth went back to the school she started her higher learning, and began mentoring the younger students like her mentors did for her. She understood that helping the younger generation achieve their goals could benefit the city and college where she began her journey. Even as a student, Annaruth knew the correct way to achieve your academic and life goals was to work hard and keep going; now as a faculty member, she is showing the next generation how to grab the brass ring the right way. Being in the position to influence so many young minds in the right way is a demanding and tall task, and Annaruth did not shy away from the responsibility; she owned it and progressed. The way she carried that responsibility and held that pressure, without cutting corners or running from it, is respectable and impressive.

As a faculty member, Annaruth noticed a change in culture on the Compton College campus. I asked what change she noticed, and she said, “We were more willing to learn and more excited about school” (Garcia). I asked for her to provide an example and she mentioned,

“When I was in school, if a professor missed a day, we were disappointed. Now, the students today hope for the professor’s absence and are happy when the instructor doesn’t come” (Garcia). I can’t attest to how the culture used to be when she was a student, but I can say that I am guilty of being excited when I see a sign-in sheet on the door for an absent instructor. Knowing that, I would hope the culture could change a little and adopt the ways of Annaruth’s generation and take more pride in our work and not be so content with mediocore.

In her own words, Annaruth Garcia said, “Education is something you can always have; no one can take that away from you” (Garcia). She is right. In a selfish way, I wrote this paper as motivation. This woman shows us that hard work has no substitute. Getting an education could actually be enjoyable and fun. Learning should not be a chore or have negative feelings; it should be shown through the eyes of Ms. Annaruth Garcia, a key to unlocking any door before you. If there is any take away from this paper, I hope that someone learned that learning does not have to be boring. Look at it as a master key to success and maybe one you could be as decorated and successful as Annaruth Garcia.

Compton College: The Legacy of Dennis B. Masias
by Joseph Brown

Dennis B. Masias, a former student turned tutor at El Camino Compton, has been around for quite some time now. He first attended El Camino Compton in 2011 right after he graduated high school. He then graduated from El Camino Compton with an associate degree in 2014 and now he currently attends Cal State University Fullerton where he plans to get his bachelor's. Dennis accomplished many things in his life, but what's more important is the struggles he faced and the people who helped along the way.

Dennis didn't always want to go to college. After high school, he actually didn't have plans for furthering his education. All summer, he would stay home, watch T.V., and chill with friends until he got a phone call from his mother one afternoon. “She dragged me to the Admissions Office and told me not to call her back until I figured that s*** out,” said Dennis, and that was the start of his great journey.

His first year attending Compton College was everything but boring for Dennis. He did many things as a student. He joined the FYE (First Year Experience) program where they guided him his freshmen year. He liked the program so much that he volunteered the following year: “I love the program so much because what it did for me as a student and because I worked with the coordinator so much I eventually got a job as an assistant.” He also worked as a Supplemental Instruction coach, which is mainly in charge of hosting study groups for specific courses that created activities to reinforce lectures.
The following year, Dennis’ great work ethic brought him to meet his current mentor, Elizabeth Martinez, who worked in the Welcome Center as Director of Enrollment Services. He worked as an outreach ambassador where he and his co workers reached out to local high schools, churches, and shopping centers to recruit students of all ages. He explains, “We helped them navigate the MyECC portal, register for classes, and answer any other questions they had about the campus and programs that were offered.”

His last year at El Camino Compton was also filled with achievements. He was handed the Brothers 2 Sisters Club and became president: “As president, alongside my cabinet, we hosted many successful events, meetings, and workshops for the students at the Compton Center.” Dennis accomplished a lot in the three years he had attended El Camino Compton: Becoming an SI coach, working as an Outreach ambassador, and taking charge of the Brothers 2 Sisters club which he became president of. However, all of this wouldn't have been possible without the people who influenced him along his journey. Albert Jimenez, Elizabeth Martinez, and Dr. Joseph Lewis were just a couple of people who influenced him along the way, but the most influential person throughout his whole journey is Maria Estrada. She was there when he wanted to give up on himself and his goals, “She came into my academic journey when I wanted to drop out of school, so I could get a job to help my family.” With Maria on his team, he was able to keep focused, stay on top of what he needed to do to become successful at El Camino and choose a major that fit his skills and interests.

Dennis graduated spring of 2014 with his Associate’s in Arts and Humanities and transferred to Cal State Fullerton that upcoming fall. He plans to graduate by spring of 2018 with a Bachelor's in Fine Arts and an emphasis on Graphic Design. Although he has graduated, he still mentors at the Compton Center and has been promoted to team leader! He also does volunteer work with different clubs on the campus and works with the Associate Student Body (ASB): “My mission is to try to get more students from college to graduate and transfer to universities!!!”

Dennis had accomplished a lot in the three years he spent at the Compton Center. He joined first year experience, became an outreach ambassador, and soon president of the Brothers 2 Sisters Club. While making good friends and meeting even greater mentors, Dennis isn’t a hero because of the many things he accomplished and the many struggles he has overcome. He is a hero because through all that he has been through he looks back and decides to help the youth so that they might get a better chance than what he had, and that is a legacy worth telling.
shook hands with a few people in the office. As I introduced myself to people, I shook their hands and smiled.

Ms. Zuniga is very busy organizing student events, while also helping students who come in her office. It was my pleasure observing her office, seeing new things, meeting new people, and learning her role on this campus. The vibe was so positive and inspiring, I will be going back to visit her office. I also suggest anybody looking to get to know their campus better should also go visit. Now, you know who Ms. Zuniga is and what her role is on El Camino Compton Center’s campus.

**Why Is Education Important?**

*by Jose Barrera*

Why is education important? The truth is it all depends on the person you're speaking to. Carlos Ornelas never imagined himself writing his own book, but once his writing was acknowledged he went on to do so. Carlos faced many adversities from taking care of his daughter to finding the time to balance school and a paying job, but in taking them on he created a creed to never give up on education.

Unique events in life shape who we become in our endeavors. Carlos Ornelas was in English class and had an essay due that day; he rushed to finish it before class and when he received an excelling grade and acknowledgment from his professor, he was filled with encouragement. This encouragement went on to persuade him to change his major from music to English and create a career from it. While at Compton College, Ornelas founded a music club, participated in the honors program, and was a part of the ASB cabinet. These programs endowed Ornelas with the confidence he needed to take charge of his life and make it better. After Ornelas graduated, he released his book *Ketchup: Sopa de Gatos* that's filled with poems and art that portray the city of Los Angeles. This book was his testament of the finest poetic work he has created throughout his life. In the end, it was these key events that changed the course of his life to pursue education.

Conflict arises when one has to make a choice between two or more ideas. Carlos Ornelas experienced internal conflict when he had to decide how much time he was going to spend on school, work, and being a parent. This pushed Ornelas to keep a hectic schedule in order to have time for all three. A second internal conflict occurred when Ornelas decided to either stick with his music major or transition into an English major and start fresh. This switch gave Ornelas purpose to continue his education under the English Department. The third internal conflict was when Ornelas was debating to either enter or not enter a poetry contest. The decision to participate, then win, gave Ornelas a confidence boost in his writing. In the end, although conflict arose that challenged the pursuit of education, Ornelas stood by and persevered through these struggles.

People’s perspective tends to change based on the influences around them. Carlos Ornelas was influenced by Ms. Juarez, an English professor, to change his major from music to English. This change allowed Ornelas to express himself in his writing like he used to in his music. Ornelas’ daughter was a huge part of his influences, so much so that he wanted to become someone known for her. This was achieved once he was able to show his daughter he is a published writer. Ornelas’ greatest influence was that he wanted his voice to be heard loud and clear through his words. This was achieved when he released his own book and showed his purpose of writing. In the end, all of these different points of view were the influences that kept Ornelas on the right track.

In conclusion, education is the driving force that makes us hunger for knowledge. Carlos Ornelas found the importance of education under English Composition and never turned back. He went through troubling years in order to get where he is today. He never left the pavement to success, but instead stayed on the bumpy road of education and voyaged onward.

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**Mandeda Uch**

*by Elijah Shoziya*

Before Mandeda Uch became one of the most dedicated music professors at El Camino Compton Center, he was just a regular student who attended Long Beach City College. Despite not going to the school, he already had history with the school. He chose to work at El Camino, not only because it was close to him, but also because he wanted to take the music program to higher and newer levels. He didn’t have the best of things, so coming to school was sometimes a challenge, but he has never had the thought of dropping out. Through his life, he has gone through trials and tribulations, but he has kept his head up and stayed strong. Now, he is one of the best music teachers at Compton El Camino.

Before working at El Camino, Prof. Uch went to Long Beach City College. From Long Beach City College, he then went to Cal State University, Fullerton. Through his whole student life, he was always a full-time student. When he transferred from LBCC to CSUF, he was still a full-time student, but then he had started working and was also in a band. From working, he was able to get a small car when he transferred to CSUF, where he received a Master’s Degree.

After graduating from Fullerton, Prof. Uch did not know what to do with his life. He had majored in education, but was not really sure if he wanted to be a core subject teacher, for an example, a math or science teacher. He didn’t feel like that was his calling. While deciding what to do with his life, he stayed in his band and worked part time at a store. After about six months, he realized that he needed a more stable source of income, so he decided to become a music teacher. He felt that being a
music teacher was a good choice for him because he loved music and majored in becoming a teacher.

When looking for a job, Compton College was one of his top choices because the school was close to where he lived. He didn't have any trouble obtaining the job. Mr. David Cobbs was the person that hired him. Mr. Cobbs basically gave him the job on the spot, which guaranteed his employment. Becoming a new employee at any new job is a tough task. This is the reason why he collaborated with Mr. Estrada of the fine arts department. Mr. Estrada helped him to form the music ensemble. You could say Prof. Uch had a smooth transition into working for Compton College.

While working for Compton College, Prof. Uch was a part of the Japanese Internment commemorative ensemble. This was very big to him because it was such a big deal in that time, so he was proud to be a part of it. Another big event that happened during that time was the Rodney King riots. His other job at the store was actually one of the stores that were burned down. He remembers how one morning, he could not find parking where he usually parked, so he had to park further away from his usual parking spot. When he was leaving the store, he noticed that all the cars where he usually parked had been vandalized or set on fire. He says he got lucky because if his car had been part of that, he would not know what to do. In spite of all these negative things happening, it did not stop Compton College from moving forward in life. The men's basketball team became state champions, which gave Compton College positive attention.

The worst thing that happened to Prof. Uch while working at Compton College was that the college lost accreditation. This was a very tragic event to everyone who was working there and attending the school. He says it was like everything was frozen. The teachers didn’t have a job and the students didn’t have a school to go to. Luckily, it didn’t take long for El Camino to come and take over for the school to gain their accreditation again.

Prof. Uch describes how Compton El Camino has changed since he has started working there. The math and science building was not there when he started working there. The library, theater, technology buildings are also new. The nursing program building was redone as well. He also explains how when he started working there, African Americans were the dominant race that was attending the school. Around 2005, Latino students started to become the more dominant race attending the school.

Prof. Uch has been a part of Compton El Camino for more than 20 years. He has been here for some of the school’s best moments and some of its worst moments. He has given a lot of time and put in a lot of work for the school. Since 2001, he has only missed one day of work. It is clear that he loves working at Compton El Camino.

Glorious Moments at El Camino College with Jonae Urabe

by Esmeralda Perez

Jonae Urabe’s journey at El Camino Compton College has gone through a variety of changes though the past years, from the great to the greatest. After being present as El Camino since 2015, Jonae was a full time student who walked everyday because “living behind El Camino was convenient,” as she discussed with my partner and me during the interview.

Jonae Urabe had a role to play while attending El Camino; she was treasurer of ASB and also the head captain of the girls’ basketball team. She was greatly influenced by her basketball coach. She stated, “My basketball coach would help us education-wise with taking us to workshops and help us with applying for a job and how to dress, what the interviewer would expect. She cared a lot more about how we can do better in our classes to help us succeed and that motivated the whole team including myself.”

Black History Month was an historical event for Jonae while being treasurer of ASB, but as she discussed, it caused a sort of conflict that made Black History Month to push back other events at the time. Although this was one historical event for Jonae, Compton made its own history. The woman’s basketball team had a 30-game losing streak in 2016, but as Jonae went on, she pointed out that “this year, 2017, the men’s basketball team made it to the playoffs but lost the last round by 3 points. It was an exceptional moment because they made it to the payoffs. Forgetting that they lost by 3 points, they were still happy.”

Graduating from El Camino Compton College is one of Jonae’s personal accomplishments, along with transferring in the spring. She considers being the Captain of the girls’ basketball team a great personal accomplishment for herself at El Camino. She told us that El Camino has grown greatly with having a variety of resources for the students and upgrading the track and football field.

“El Camino, in my opinion, is more diverse than any other community college. I myself am African American, Japanese, and Hawaiian so all that is an amazing part of getting to know people here at El Camino,” says Jonae Urabe. She begins describing the park that was just built not too long ago from the corner of her house: it used to be an empty park where no one would go, but since it’s been remodeled, lots of people go.

Mural Madness was one of Jonae’s campus memories. “Mural Madness was soo [sic] busy, we only had about 4 to 5 members helping out and arranging things because it was very busy, but at the end of the day, we did okay,” states Jonae. Sophomore night was an emotional night for friends and herself. She sadly stated that they had to go to El Camino Torrance College because it was rainy, so it wasn’t as expected.
El Camino Compton College is said to be a college that isn’t “good” because it’s in Compton, but that’s only because people judge things without actually knowing the place and their surroundings. El Camino has improved a lot, and it continued to grow with the help of students who attend El Camino. Jonae left us with something that changed the way others can think about El Camino and improving the school: “it doesn’t depend on the campus to make things happen, YOU have to make it happen if you want it to get done.”

Compton College: Staff Member’s Story
by MyQuan Evans

The person that I interviewed has been in association with Compton College since 1972 till the present. Today, she plays her part in many on-campus activities, like counseling and human development, but has contributed to many other things in her history with this school. Her name is Carmela Aguilar, and it has been 45 long years ago that she got her start here at Compton College. A man named Anthony Liccione once said “A tree stands strong not by its fruits or branches, but by the depths of its roots.” I would say her years of commitment to this campus have set a deeply rooted starting point for her success today.

Carmela has had lots of experience at other schools, such as UCLA and Dominguez Hills, but her career got its start on this campus. While working on getting her A.A., she became a student worker in the office. She was very busy, taking no time off as a full time student and office aid. As a student, she really enjoyed her history class and even befriended her professor. This later inspired her to become a history teacher herself. Carmela felt that history was a key subject because it helped students understand the world that we live in. She enjoyed working as a history professor very much.

Around 1985, Alex Fisher, a fellow instructor of Carmela’s at Compton College, became very ill and could not make it to work. The school being in the middle of a semester was in desperate need of someone who could teach his class, so they asked Carmela if she would be able to substitute his class. She was very hesitant because the class was an English class, a subject she had no training to teach. Despite her doubts, she began studying and took on the challenge. Sadly, Alex Fisher passed away not too long afterwards, due to his illness, leaving the school in a haze. Carmela went on to become the permanent teacher.

Her activities with this school are very widespread. She has had experience instructing the cheerleaders, putting on student dances, and helping students earn their G.E.D. Carmela decided to stay with Compton College for over 45 years because she truly felt part of this community. This campus allowed her to stay close to her family and friends while pursuing her career goals. Carmela feels that her experience here at Compton College is a very unique one for many reasons. A main reason is because Compton College used to be in association with Compton High School which made relationships on campus much more tightly knitted. The two schools being connected benefitted everyone. Back then, the college had a yearbook, allowing the staff and graduates to look back on their academic careers which is rare for a college to have. There were other benefits, like school dances and field trips that I’m sure everyone appreciated. This campus has transformed in many ways along with Carmela who has had a big impact on the people here. For Carmela, Compton College is long to be forgotten.

Compton College: The New and the Old
by Angel Galindo

How much has El Camino College Compton Center changed over the years? A new library has been built three years ago which looks brand new even till this day. A new health center has also been added for a change. Even with new things coming up in this school, there are the same old things still in existence in campus. For example, classrooms have looked the same and bathrooms are still the same without a change. This school had made improvements in some departments, but still has room for more improvements to make in the future.

In the eyes of Professor Maradiaga, the classes have looked the same throughout the years and have stayed the same small size. For a long period of time, the classrooms have looked exactly the same without any sort of modification. The bathrooms on campus as well: they have not changed at all and they are in desperate need of remodeling. In “Flavio’s Home,” Gordon Parks says, “Pockets of poverty in New York’s Harlem, on Chicago’s south side, in Puerto Rico’s infamous El Fungito seemed pale by comparison,” could be somewhat related to how old and busted the classes and bathrooms have been (Parks). With little mishaps in this school, there have been improvements that have been made. The new which is the library and the health center have been added to the improvements that have been made within the campus. Just as “Flavio’s Home,” Flavio has made remarkable improvements in his life which goes with what Maradiaga has seen in this campus.[…]

When it comes to touch Maradiaga feels many things in the classrooms and in her office that shouldn’t feel like it would collapse with just the slightest touch. For example, the seats in the classrooms for the students are extremely uncomfortable. The seats aren’t the only thing that feels weak; the tables and the chairs creak as if they’re minutes away from breaking. The chairs and the tables in the classrooms could relate to the furniture in “Flavio’s Home” where “Still smiling, he wacked the baby’s rump, invited us in and offered us a box to sit on. The only other recognizable furniture was a sagging bed and a broken baby’s crib” (Parks). Even with messed up seats and tables in classrooms, Maradiaga has seen a change within the library with new stable chairs and tables.
Also, the computers and keyboards in the computer lab don’t feel old and rusty, but feel brand new. Both Maradiaga and Parks feel the uncomfortable furniture in the classrooms and the home of Flavio. This school has made progress when it comes to remodeling the way this school looks. Professor Maradiaga would love to see more change within the school. She also says that there will be more change as in knocking down a building and recreating a new building. The old library that is still standing on campus will be built into something new. Maradiaga isn’t sure what the new building would be or when the reconstruction would start; however, she is really excited for the future of this school. From the looks of things, this school has a bright new future.

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Compton College: Growing a Future
by Gabriel Navarrete
In a city that is often looked down on and even ignored, is there a future for Compton College? Amid decades of rubble and decay, we can start to see glistening new pillars of hope for a future. There are many new structures on campus, and noticeably, more to come. There is a rise in population diversity and sense of community and acceptance. There are also more faculty and resources that are noticeably fighting to help the college create a better future. A future can be had if we have a positive mindset. “Practice who you are today, for the future leader you will be tomorrow” is a quote often used by Louis Williams, a student advisor at Compton College since 2014. This quote usually shared with the students he interacts with, can be applied to the school. Found in a city that is known for its high volume of gangs and violence, Compton College is supplying a place of knowledge and opportunities. Between the old crusted red brick classroom and office buildings rise glistening windows and empowering metallic structure of the new Library. Also, at the other end of campus, a prolific nursing department with a technologically advanced interior that rivals state universities. As an outreach worker, Williams is glad to promote these facilities and others to come to potential students at the surrounding high schools.

The involvement of students and faculty is crucial to a better future of the college as “[i]t will take a new wave of citizen activism to avoid repetition of old mistakes” (Helvarg 102). Faculty like Lou Williams who continually show interest and involvement in helping the community are what we need. His program to help homeless youth in the community learn financial literacy, employment, and life skills is a great example of activism. Although the student population is still lacking in diversity, there is a noticeable effort to create a sense of community.

Moving from constant fighting amongst races, to the celebration of cultural holidays; taking part in, and supporting black lives matter movement; even the attendance to sporting events show school values that will influence future generations.

What is the future of Compton College? The future can be what we make it today. There must be an investment from faculty, students, and the community. They must all take accountability for what they want to create.

America: Compton with Estina Pratt
by Amira Toadvine
Fall of 1988 is when Estina Pratt began attending Compton College. With children and a few siblings attending and taking classes on campus, Estina was hired to be a part of the staff. In 1988, after looking and applying for jobs, she was finally employed as a full time librarian at the Compton College library. It is now 2017, and Estina Pratt is still a part of campus staff.

Estina attended two universities before settling down and working at Compton. She's attended Kent State University in Ohio and Atlanta University now known as Clark, a Historically Black University. Not stopping there, Pratt took several continuing education classes. After finishing her education and earning her degree, Estina decided to settle and look for a job. In 1988, she applied and was employed as a full time librarian here at Compton.

Estina was living a slow paced, manageable life as a single mother at the time. Being a mother made things a bit challenging at times, but overall she says working full time and being a parent was attainable since she knew how to manage her time well. Being her own motivator and positive influence, Estina was very determined and diligent when it came to work and taking care of her children.

While working at Compton, Estina recalls very few community and society conflicts. However, she does recall the basketball team making it to the championships and certain celebrity visits. She's also noticed a difference in the campus and community appearance. Estina says, “The area was quiet and secluded, but now everyone seems to know about the school.” There are many new buildings such as the VocTech building, accompanied by the same long standing, ragged ones, such as the E-Room building. Along with the new VocTech, the library and Math/Science buildings are new as well.

Along with new buildings and a growing population, the school’s ethnic, racial, and gender demographics expanded also. During 1988, the majority of the campus was African Americans, but now it all seems to be balanced. Estina says she has noticed many more Pacific Islanders on campus as well. As the campus expanded and continued to grow, so did the community. She recalls there being hardly any food places or anything around, but now we have the Compton Towne Center.
which provides many food places and other convenient stores. Back then, if she needed food or anything else, she'd have to drive to a completely different city to get it, but now she's able to drive less than five minutes. 

Her many years here, Estina says her favorite place is still outside. Taking a walk on the walkway path and admiring the sight of nature is her favorite thing to do during her free time. Event wise, her favorite thing was the Women's Conference. She's helped work on it and organize it for the women of the school. Seeing women come together and speak together gave her joy.

Compton with Estina has been eventful. She's experienced and witnessed the campus growth and expansion. Not only has she witnessed the campus change, but the community change, too. All the way from 1988 to 2017, Estina is still with Compton and says she will always be a part of Compton.

A Look at Compton: Through the Eyes of Andree Valdry
by Justin Aguilar

There are many landmarks in the city of Compton, California. The El Camino College Compton Center is a major one. Many citizens of Compton and surrounding citizens use this institution to propel themselves into their careers. For others, this is where their career lies.

Andree Valdry is a librarian at El Camino College Compton Center. She began her career with the Compton Center in 1999. She was referred by a family member who was the librarian at the time. Although her employment at Compton College was established in the year 1999, she became connected with the institute in the 1960s through her father, who was an academic counselor at the time. Her brother, Renee also attended the institution in the mid-1980s. But before being hired at El Camino College Compton Center, she collected several accolades and had some help along the way.

Ms. Valdry earned her Bachelor’s Degree at UCLA in English as well as her Master’s in the field of Library & Info Science. After collecting these degrees, she had a bit of a hard time beginning her career. Fortunately, she was referred to El Camino College Compton Center by her aunt who was the school librarian at the time. While working as a librarian at Compton College, she has had several influences including her supervisor, Mrs. Pratt who Andree describes as encouraging and always gives great advice. Someone who also constantly has a positive influence on her is a member of the tech committee, Dr. Murray, who Ms. Valdry says helps set achievable, yet challenging goals for herself. As a result, she is having a successful career at Compton College as she has spent the last 18 years at the institution. During this period, she experienced some turmoil for the Compton Center, the city of Compton, surrounding communities, and the nation.

The El Camino College Compton Center wasn’t always a sister campus of El Camino College. Once known as an independent community college, Compton College lost its accreditation in the year 2005: “ACCJC, the organization that accredits community and junior colleges, announced that the decision to terminate Compton College’s accreditation would become effective August 19, 2005.” According to U.S. Federal News Service, the original Compton College lost its accreditation because of its “lack of student support services, comprehensive educational master plan and institutional research capacity to support such a plan, as well as continued inadequacy of administrative staff.” According to Andree Valdry, this news dominated the attention of most, if not all students and staff members. California Community Colleges Chancellor Mark Drummond attempted to intervene and repair the issues that threatened the accreditation of Compton College. “I'm going to use the full resources of my office to advocate on behalf of the students at Compton,” said Chancellor Drummond. The Chancellor was adamant on keeping local education available to the 6,000 students of Compton. Despite valiant efforts to rectify severe problems within the institution’s fiscal and administrative departments, they were not enough to satisfy the standards of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College. As a result, Compton College has since merged with El Camino College as a sister campus.

Since its loss of accreditation in August of 2005, staff members and administrators of the El Camino College Compton Center have been thriving as a sister campus of El Camino College. As a result, current California Community Colleges Chancellor announced on February 14, 2017, “That governance of the Compton Community College District will be returned to the district’s elected board of trustees, saying the move signals impressive achievement toward creating an independent, accredited college within the Compton Community College District.” Oakley also stated, “It is an important step toward the ultimate goal of seeing that Compton College once again operate as an accredited institution under the sole control of Compton Community College District.” According to Targeted News Service of Washington D.C., the Compton Community College District can achieve full accreditation and independence by the year 2020 pending a four step process.
Also, the Governor of California, director of the state Department of Finance and the state chancellor must agree that Compton College has maintained certain requirements for two consecutive years in order to reinstate its accreditation and independence from El Camino College. Andree Valdry along with her fellow staff members are very close to completing an over decade long journey to once again being an accredited California Community College. An achievement Valdry would be proud to have contributed to.

Andree Valdry is a valued member of the Compton Center who has given much of her time and efforts to play her role in the reinstitution of Compton College’s accreditation. Although the journey is not quite over, the goal is in sight and within reach. With her continued efforts added to that of the rest of the staff and administration, there is no doubt that the El Camino College Compton Center will once again earn its original title of simply, Compton College.

Compton: The Change in the Suburb
by Evelyn Sam

Education is the most important factor in anyone’s life, especially minorities who come from a rough background. Compton is that city where countless minorities live. Michael Odanaka, the person I interviewed, works at El Camino Center where he dedicates his time helping students succeed. During his interview, he stated his experience as an educational counselor and his experience at El Camino Compton. Although he was not born and raised in Compton, he spent the rest of his years dedicated to this city striving to make a change. Michael Odanaka conveyed his primary experiences and knowledge about his involvement in Compton.

Michael Odanaka is not originally from Compton, but he is a figure from El Camino Center who experienced a little bit of it. He was born and raised in a different state, Chicago, Illinois. He kept his path dedicated to education. Because he is dedicated to education, he became knowledgeable and successful. He attended Dartmouth College in Massachusetts earning a Bachelor’s degree in philosophy. Later on, he pursued his first Master’s degree in theology from Fuller Theological Seminary; then, he pursued his second Master’s in psychology at Cal State University of Los Angeles. The roles he played in his life remained dedicated to education. He did not stop his involvement with education at graduation. He furthered his path by investing his time helping students in school. Education to Mr. Odanaka is very significant, and as someone who completed his goals, he wanted to pass it forward.

Mr. Odanaka became a part of the El Camino faculty in December 1987. He currently resides in Walnut and used to commute 30 miles every day. However, in June 2015, he retired and now works only one day a week. He worked as an EOPS counselor for 27 years. As a counselor, he “meets with students to discuss their education goals and assist in their academic planning, also frequently do career counseling and at times discuss personal, non-academic issues and to encourage students and support as they pursue their goals” (Odanaka). Not only was he a counselor, he played many other roles over the course of 30 years such as an affirmative action officer, interim director of EOPS, taught human development classes, and was an academic senator and president. Before coming to El Camino Compton, he worked eight years at UCLA in the Academic Advancement Program that involved working with students who “come from high-need families, are the first in their families to go to college, are recent immigrants, or come from populations that have been historically underrepresented at the university” (UCLA). The reason why he came to El Camino Center is because he wanted to make a change for those students in Compton. That is what drove him to commute everyday to work, so he can accomplish that goal.
welfare dependence, illiteracy and unemployment soared” (Davis). Since Mr. Odanaka had worked in the Academic Advancement Program in UCLA and had earned a Bachelor’s and Master’s, he utilized his experiences to guide these students towards success.

During his time in El Camino Center, his hard work did not go unnoticed. In 2014, Michael Odanaka, an “El Camino College Compton Center counselor and human development instructor, was named recipient of the full-time faculty member of the year award for his leadership and local advocacy efforts” (The Messenger).

Figure 2. Mr. Odanaka holding his award
He received this honor because of all the efforts that he has put into his job on behalf of the faculty and for his students. Not only did he invest his time helping students, he worked really hard in this school so that he can gain appreciation, acknowledgment, and respect for the faculty members as well. Once he got his award, he responded:

“I am honored to receive this award on behalf of the entire faculty at El Camino College Compton Center,” said Odanaka in his acceptance speech. “I have the privilege of serving the local communities along with an extraordinary group of individuals dedicated to teaching, counseling, and providing vital student support services. The faculty has worked incredibly hard to help build and strengthen the partnership between the El Camino College and Compton Community College Districts” (The Messenger).

He invested his full time to get to where he wanted to be and in doing so, he received a very rewarding acknowledgment.

Throughout the course of Michael Odanaka’s time in El Camino, an event happened around his arrival. The most significant event he experienced bestowed negative remarks upon the El Camino Center’s reputation. The community college lost its accreditation in 2004 and that led into the impression that the school did not meet the expectations required of educational quality. In Mr. Odanaka’s position, he was concerned for the students of El Camino and for the well being of the school. El Camino College Center losing their accreditation took a toll on many staff members and especially students. This issue was very significant because of the concern that “7,000 students, most of whom are minority and low-income, are wondering what the future holds for them” (Fisher, 2004). After all, the average household income of Compton is about $50,000, and the city does not receive high funds itself either, so it will be hard on these students who need educational funds (CSULB census). Students who are from a low income family attend this community college in hopes for a better future. However, when the school loses its accreditation, then that leaves students with no aspiration because all the credit that they worked hard for will not be “eligible for transfer to a higher education institute” (Fisher 2). “Without accreditation, the college is not eligible for state or federal funding” meaning that all students, especially the students who are underrepresented and from a low income family will lose that support (Fisher 2). It is unfair to the students who have worked hard and Michael Odanaka’s efforts. The injustice of the revoked accreditation really evokes a depressing feeling because of the well being of the students and staff. However, as the time is passing, El Camino Center is slowly growing as well as Michael Odanaka.

Throughout all of the events, Michael Odanaka’s life is education. He counseled to better his students’ life, he worked endlessly to better the school, and he stayed dedicated to better himself in the process. As El Camino Center is growing, he is growing, too. He said he was going to this school for a purpose, and that purpose is still in progress because of his dedication to his words and to his students.

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Michael Odanaka's Compton
by David Cooper
Compton, California, is a city with a rich history that has seen a tremendous amount of change over the years. According to comptonicity.org, “The City of Compton was officially incorporated on May 11, 1888” (“History of Compton,” 1). Compton is one of the oldest cities in Los Angeles, and therefore has seen many years of change flow
through its city limits. Josh Sides, author of the article “Straight into Compton” states that, “The vision of Compton as ‘the ideal home city’ and as a ‘residential center for industrial workers’ appealed to thousands of California-bound migrants from the Midwest between the 1920s and the 1950s, who sought suburban tranquility amid ample blue-collar employment” (Sides 1). However, these migrants between the 1920s and the 1950s were White, which creates a pretty drastic change from then to modern day Compton. This paper will argue that this significant change in demographics has brought about many other profound alterations to the dynamics of the city and its institutions, with rational, ethical, and emotional implications. First, the paper will introduce Mr. Michael Odanaka. Then the text will cover Compton’s demographics changing and how the school lost its accreditation. Next, what is discussed will be how there is a high concentration of low income families and immigrants in the city. And lastly, the text will highlight the emotional effects that are manifested due to the heavy rates of violence. […] When asked about important historical events surrounding the city, the first thing that Mr. Odanaka mentions is the fact that the city of Compton “Transitioned from being a white suburb, to all black, then to half Latino – half Black, and now with the majority being Latino” (Odanaka). The influx of Black immigrants was caused by Southern Black families seeking relocation in search of what they thought would be a better life with more opportunities. Furthermore, Josh Sides states that, “Latinos already made up 42 percent of the city’s population by 1990 and officially became a majority population in 2000” (Sides 1). Today, if one was to drive through Compton, it is very evident that there are in fact practically no white people, and that although the black population is still large, Latinos are the majority group of people. Although this was the first rational appeal that Mr. Odanaka mentioned, it was not the only one.

The second important historical event that Mr. Odanaka mentioned is when his beloved college lost its accreditation. The school has not always been El Camino College Compton Center. It is the current title because in 2005, the school lost its accreditation. According to Marla Jo Fisher of the newspaper Community College Weekly, some of the reasons as to why accreditation was removed was because of “poor financial, hiring and firing decisions, lack of ethics policies, and bad direction from leadership, including the Board of Trustees” (CC Weekly, 3). This was such a big blow to the school as well as to the community because development in today’s society starts with education, which eventually leads to money. If the youth in the community cannot get an education for themselves, how can they possibly be expected to contribute to the community, let alone themselves. Aside from this challenge, this paper will discuss some other ethical challenges that the city and its members have to overcome in order to progress.

The first ethical appeal that will be highlighted is the high concentration of low income residents that the city of Compton possesses. However, one must go deeper than the surface to understand how this high prevalence of low income residents is brought upon by systematic oppression from the people in power. According to George Lipsitz’s book, The Possessive Investment in Whiteness, “Race has been found to be an independent factor in predicting exposure to various environmental hazards” and “A sinister correlation to race and health” (Lipsitz 9). The particular environmental hazard at hand here is poverty. The residents of Compton, who are Latino and Black, find themselves in tough financial times because of their skin color; and furthermore, because America tries to “keep them in their place” by making it hard for these individuals to advance their economic condition. When individuals don’t have money, it makes it hard to obtain higher schooling, and when it’s hard to obtain a higher degree, it’s harder to obtain a higher paying job. When one doesn’t have a higher paying job, the individual will struggle to support themselves and their family, and now we have a cycle of tough times for generation after generation. The point trying to be made here is that it is extremely difficult for young people in Compton to progress, particularly in education. For example, some kids have to work so many hours in order to help their families that they fall asleep in class, so then they don’t graduate. So ultimately the student is never able to truly help oneself because he or she is caught in this hamster wheel of trying to survive, but not necessarily surviving and advancing. Perhaps if Compton were white like it was in the 40’s, then things may be very different for the residents.

To further elaborate on the previous paragraph, it is important to note that Compton is a city with a large immigrant population, and in America, a nation of immigrants, immigrants do not get treated fairly. Josh Sides provides some facts on the treatment of Latinos in the political spectrum:

Latinos in Compton, of course, have already been the subject of careful scholarly investigation and responsible media reporting, but the extent to which they become part of the popular notion of Compton remains to be seen. Far more important to Compton’s Latinos, however, is the extent to which they are represented politically in this longtime bastion of black political empowerment. As political scientist Regina Freer has
demonstrated, Compton's black leaders have generally viewed the assertion of Latino demands as a threat to not only their own individual power, but more broadly as threats to African American political empowerment. (Sides 1)
The struggle for power in America is still just as nasty as it was hundreds of years ago. We have one group of color putting down another group of color, by impeding their political progress to better themselves. These hardships just make it harder for everybody in Compton to progress. They are essentially bringing the whole city down with them as these individuals try to meet their selfish needs. Moreover, the last appeal this essay needs to acknowledge is that of the emotional.

Violence is a major factor in the city of Compton and will be the subject in regards to discussing an emotional appeal. Factors such as drug trafficking, poverty, gangs, and racial tensions have caused Compton to be a fertile territory for violence. In Emily E. Strauss’ book, Death of a Suburban Dream, she shares a firsthand account of a teacher at Compton High that states, “the third week into school I had gone over to the district office and came back and there was a body covered in a sheet down the hall from my room, two doors down. Apparently one student accosted another student and the kid pulled out a gun and just shot him right there in class” (Strauss 129). Kids in Compton see death as a result of violence at a very young age and that leaves scars on the human brain that last forever. These emotional scars cause kids to revolt, act out, and do things they normally wouldn’t do because they have to overcompensate for this fear of violence or for a sense of unwarranted aggression. This is serious because these emotional scars can affect kids in the sense that they may not stay in school, or get a job, or progress in society; and as stated earlier, this just adds to this continuous cycle of negative events that are surrounding the city.

To conclude, I personally think that Compton has come a long way, but it still has a tremendous way to go. Some of the most important problems I feel that affect the city are the socioeconomic factors that come from systematic racism and oppression. The most important thing in today’s society is money, and when you deprive a group of people of money, there is no way in which that group can seek to advance themselves in society. I’m also happy to hear that homicide rates in Compton have gone down. And most importantly to the school, that the accreditation is expected to be restored again. I look forward to seeing how Compton continues to progress and improve despite the obstacles that tend to show up.

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Compton College: Historical Events
by Rubi Cisneros

El Camino Compton College has seen many people pass through its corridors and many people have seen it grow. There is a lot of history in the campus also; there are people that studied on campus that now work here. It’s amazing to see how the city and the campus have grown throughout the years. It has been through many events in the past. Dr. Sylvia Arroyo is one of the many people that studied here and now are employees; she has seen how much the campus has grown throughout the years. The city has a lot to do with the growth of the college.

One of the many people to attend El Camino Compton College was Dr. Sylvia Arroyo. She became involved with the campus in May 1998. When she started working here, she was a part time professor, then adjunct counselor. Many of Dr. Arroyo’s family attended the campus. Two of her youngest brothers, her sister, niece, and one of her nephews attended El Camino Compton College. Dr. Arroyo’s sister also works on the campus now; her name is Celia Arroyo. She was able to manage school and work even though it was very hectic. […]

The most devastating thing Dr. Arroyo got to witness while working here was when the college lost its accreditation. She had to learn the new rules and regulations for the new system. To her, it felt like she was starting a brand-new job. It was very stressful. Having to witness that was an enormous shock to her because that had never happened before in education. I would have been upset if I had witnessed my work place lose its value. No school should lose its accreditation for one thing; people should notice when someone is stealing money.[…]

Dr. Arroyo has many accomplishments throughout her career. There are many people that have accomplished many things in life, like getting a great career and getting a high degree.
Figure 1. Dr. Arroyo is sitting on her student’s brand new motorcycle. She had her own bike before.

Getting her doctorate degree was an amazing accomplishment for her even though it was very expensive. Having to work as a counselor is a great achievement to her because she gets to help students understand what major they are interested in going to. A person like Dr. Arroyo is amazing because she came back to give back to her college and help others. Sometimes, some people don’t understand how stressful and how hard it is to get a good career. She is a great person to admire; she has accomplished many things.

The city of Compton and El Camino Compton College have a lot of historical events we don’t know of. If it wasn’t for people like Dr. Arroyo […] that can tell us interesting events that happen we wouldn’t know anything. We need people who are willing to share their stories with us and educate us. I myself love history and would love to learn much more interesting facts about our history. […] Dr. Arroyo also told me interesting facts about the college campus that I didn’t know because I was not around during that time.

Celia Arroyo: Compton’s History
by Jennifer Orellana

Many people who aren’t from the area think of the city of Compton as the worst place to live. Compton has been known for its high crime rates, poverty, and gangs. Many who have judged the city of Compton and the people who live there, are the ones who have judged based on its past. In the late 1980s, Compton was the place to fear: “Compton had experienced a staggeringly high murder rate of almost 91 homicides per 100,000 residents” (TSE). But in an interview with the Mayor of Compton, Mayor Aja Brown said, “Our violent crime has gone down 50 percent, even in the last year. And over the last 20 years, crime is down 71 percent” (Takahashi). Years before that was going on, in the Fall semester of 1979, Celia Arroyo began school at El Camino College Compton Center. She graduated with her AA degree in Human Development in 1981. Ms. Arroyo didn’t stop there; she also graduated from California State University of Dominguez Hills with two bachelor's degrees in bilingual education and counseling. Six years later, in 1987, Celia began to work at El Camino College Compton Center as an Administrator. Despite of the things going on in Compton while Celia was attending school and after she got a job as a counselor, she managed to help the city grow and become better.

With the privilege of interviewing Ms. Arroyo, I got to know her and the city of Compton better. The reason why Celia came to Compton as a teen was to grow up and serve her community. She wanted to show others the opportunities Compton had while others stereotyped. While Ms. Arroyo was a full time student at El Camino College Compton Center, she was also a single parent of one. During the 1980s, there was no financial aid offered to students. Celia had to work two part-time jobs to pay for school and her personal expenses. She would take the bus from her house to school and from school to work. It was hard for her as it would be for any mother to leave her child to go to work or school to make sure they have what they need without struggling. Throughout the years, Ms. Arroyo noticed the change of population in Compton as well as the changes the school has had.

When Celia first arrived to Compton, 58 percent of the population were Caucasians, 25 percent Hispanics, 10 percent Black, and 7 percent others. As years went by, most of the population are Hispanics and Blacks. With the change of population, the school has come a long way from when Ms. Arroyo was a student: “When I attended here, we had no library, no math and science building, and no vocational technology center” (Arroyo). Now, the school has those three new buildings and for the second time a reconstructed parking lot. As Ms. Arroyo and I continued to talk, she mentioned a historical event El Camino College Compton Center went through in 2005.

In 2005, El Camino College lost its accreditation. The reason the school lost its accreditation was because of financial problems and administrative corruption. Most staff and faculty were disappointed about the situation, but the only thing was to move forward and try to better the school to get its accreditation back. During that time, Celia was saddened by the situation, but was trying to make the best out of it. If the only way of getting back accreditation was by setting goals and following them, then that was what Ms. Arroyo was going to persuade her fellow coworkers and herself to work on. Now, after twelve years of working hard, El Camino College Compton Center will be getting its accreditation back.

Getting to know Ms. Arroyo was amazing. She spoke about her sister, Sylvia Arroyo, who also works at El Camino. Sylvia and Celia are only a couple years apart which makes everything fun. They were able to experience things together and support one another throughout their life.
Figure 1. Celia Arroyo is our El Camino College Compton Center counselor. She has been working for more than ten years and is proud to serve our community. She will continue helping students and the city of Compton reach to the top.

She also mentioned she had a brother named Ignacio who she loves as much as her sister. They all grew up loving and supporting one another in their decisions. They choose to start a life in Compton because they wanted the best for themselves as well as the community: “Without each other’s support we wouldn’t have made it this far” (Arroyo). Hearing Ms. Arroyo speak about her family showed me how much they mean to her.

Celia had many favorite memories at El Camino, but the one she mentioned to me was hanging out by the old library sitting under a tree. She loved hanging out by the old library because she felt relaxed and wasn’t bothered by anyone. Spending time alone was relaxing to her because she never had much time to enjoy to herself. School and work stressed her out and going home was still a plate full because she had a kid to come home to. She also mentioned how she enjoyed observing a mother bird nurturing her babies. Although there was peace, Compton had gone through its worst nightmare.

In the early 1990s, racial injustice and police brutality was a big issue. During that time, Ms. Arroyo was already working and was able to witness the Compton Riots. It all began because four LAPD officers brutally beat Rodney King and were found not guilty. Many people were so furious about the incident that it caused chaos. Many stores were vandalized, the streets were covered in fire, and some families feared for their lives. Everything became a target to show the anger people had with the racial injustice and police brutality going on in that time. A month after the riots, many people began to settle down: “An estimated 30,000 people marched for racial healing and in support of beleaguered merchants in Koreatown” (Moore). The riots caused so much damage to the community that gangs became more active.

Most people from gangs kill one another because of racial differences or because of territory. They want to own territory to claim it with pride. Once something doesn’t seem right, war begins: “The national and local print and visual media have made much of African American and Latino conflict at many levels-- in politics, in education, in gangs, and in other youth violence” (Camarillo). In my opinion, most people who get into gangs just want to make it out the streets. I believe they grew up with not having much support from parents. They struggled to get where they want without guidance. Ms. Arroyo has heard stories of students who have come to her for help. Those students had fear for their lives. They didn’t want to end up in a gang because they knew it wasn’t a good thing for them. Many who seek for help are the ones who make Compton proud.

The city of Compton may have had its rough times during its years of growing. But it's not a bad city as some stereotypes make it seem. Many great actors, singers, athletes, and more have come from the city of hope and proven to others that we are one of a kind. Celia Arroyo and many of our El Camino College Compton Center professors are the ones who’ve helped make Compton a better community. With them working for more than ten years and helping students reach their goal is what the community needs. Celia chose to come to Compton to make history. She has served our community and has made it better. With all the positivity given and encouragement, students choose to be great. We are making history each day our Compton people achieve their goals. We are proving to others that Compton is the city to be in.

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Compton’s 90th
by Johanna Gomez

When one thinks of Compton, California, they often associate it with gang violence, failing public schools, and economic disinvestment. However, over the years Compton and its schools fell victim to the vicious cycle of debt and despair. Because of past decisions made from Compton’s schools, it has limited possibilities of reform for this dysfunctional system. As Compton faced challenges and the majority
population shifted in the twentieth century from white to African-American and Latino, the battle to control the school district became a symbol of Compton’s struggle.

In the book*Death of a Suburban Dream*, Emily Straus explores Compton’s economic and demographic transformation. The narrative shows how racialized poverty and violence made Compton. Emily Straus provides oral history of twenty-one current and former Compton residents to reveal economic fragility and public debt. In the first half of the twentieth century, working class whites were a major part of Compton’s development. Because the suburbs of Compton were close to the growing city of Los Angeles, Compton’s leaders had to maintain racial boundaries. However, Compton’s downfall magnified when an earthquake in 1933 destroyed most of the city and caused a major setback in rebuilding, especially for Compton’s schools. In addition, in World War II, industrial growth in Los Angeles and the expansion of the population caused further stretching of Compton’s local resources. As a result, the public schooling and future generations in Compton would be paying the price for years to come.

In relation to the previous information, post WWII, Compton became an attractive suburb for middle class African Americans. Straus documents post-war segregation: “The consequences for schools existed at multiple levels, from students whose mothers watched over their sleep with rifles to interracial fights (79, 93). At the time, California’s school districts allowed white residents to maintain segregation as African-Americans moved into the city. However, Watts riots also influenced the migration of the majority of the African American population from Watts to move into Compton, and Whites left to escape the riots. Eventually, the population would then become mostly Latino.

In comparison, in the article, “Returning to Compton”, Albert Camarillo strolls through memory lane of the city he left behind in 1970 and returns in despair to a city in 2000 with desperate cries for help. According to Camarillo, he remembers a city that was white, black and brown. He has come to find that the city has become predominately black and brown yet, the Latino population has outgrown the African American. Today, Latinos in the community fight to keep the city safe as did white and African American families before them. However, Compton’s stigma of violence has yet to dissolve. He stresses “Compton became known in the media as the ‘murder city’ capitol of the nation” (Camarillo, par. 10). However, “They are pushing back, albeit not without tension, conflict, and misunderstanding among themselves” (ibid.). Albert recognizes that Compton is a city that is struggling to rebuild itself in a low income community: “This is the important story about the city that must be told.” He writes, “It is a city struggling to rebuild an economic foundation in the wake of an economy where low wage, service sector work largely replaced skilled, unionized employment that had once attracted people to the Los Angeles metropolitan region” (Camarillo, par. 11). The city of Compton is not defined by their struggles and their flaws but is defined by its citizens’ efforts to make the city good again as it once was.

In contrast to “Death of a Suburban Dream”, student Audrey Casas shows how perseverance and determination can improve the devastating path of Compton’s public schooling. Audrey has experienced the growth of Compton College throughout the years. In 1999, Audrey Casas became connected with Compton College for the first time at the age of eighteen years old. She attended the old Compton College and described obstacles she had to overcome. For instance, during Audrey’s interview, she expressed she had an on-and-off again relationship with Compton College and stressed how important it was for her to return to school to obtain a degree. Audrey’s two sons, twelve and two years old, were her motivation and reason to return to school. Casas wanted to make sure she could provide a better life for her children, and she knew that through education and with a degree she could make that her reality. According to Audrey, when she came back to school her major was going to be in healthcare, yet it was when she was in Professor Roach’s English class that was all going to change. Casas told the interviewers that Professor Roach approached her about her writing and suggested she consider becoming an English major because she saw potential in her writing. In the end, Audrey has pursued English as her major and has been chosen to be the student speaker for class of 2017.

In relation to Audrey’s educational journey, Casas expresses how family played a big role in her education. Maria Lopez, the mother of Audrey was an ESL student, yet she became the first female Hispanic ASB president. Audrey’s mother graduated in 1996 from the old Compton College and her brother graduated from El Camino Compton Center in 2006. In addition, Audrey will be graduating June 9, 2017. Audrey stresses that El Camino College is still old Compton Center. She emphasizes that the bulk of Compton College is the spirit it still presents; however, Compton College today has become more approachable. During the interview, she explained that the old enrollment process was discouraging to incoming students because of the extensive paperwork and waiting time. When she first attended, she states that the school was predominately African-American. However, Latinos and Asian-
Americans began to attend Compton College as well. Audrey reminisces about Tartar days at Compton College. She recalls the booming sounds of drums being played by the marching band and the lively school rallies. Fortunately, Audrey mentions that Compton is taking steps in a new direction with its diversity.

In relation to Audrey’s memorable experiences at El Camino Compton Center, there were also some unfortunate memories. When Audrey was younger, she remembers her mother describing the LA riots when she attended Compton College, and she remembers attending school with the National Guard surrounding the campus in army tanks. Unfortunately, Audrey mentioned how old Compton College was unaccredited and was passing students whose academics didn’t match up. For instance, there was a case of a student who attended old Compton College and transferred to UCR. However, UCR discovered the student couldn’t read and write at the university transfer level and went on to investigate the student’s transcripts. The student paid the “right” people to get to UCR, but later was kicked out. Although Audrey’s journey with El Camino is almost at its end, she will always remember all the time and effort she put into her job as a student. Audrey appreciates everything Compton has offered and embraces it. She states, “Compton is blessed to have a local community college and fortunate enough that it has made a turn for the better” (Casas). She acknowledges “environmentally we are from a geographical region and we should embrace it!” (Casas). From being a part-time student to becoming a full-time student with a full time job to juggling a social life and family, Audrey pushed through all the barriers and obstacles with time management and hope.

According to the facts I’ve obtained through my research, Compton is still misrepresented by one’s lack of knowledge of the city’s history. Although Compton is thought of as a gang violent city, the citizens of Compton and its representatives are working hard to rebuild the community and improve public schooling. In addition, students like Audrey are paving the way for the future of Compton and its failing public schools. She is the epitome of Compton, and she is the motivation for steps toward improvement for the city and its schools. Unfortunately, Compton’s progress in rebuilding the community and schools is still in progress, but as long as the citizens remain involved and strive for change, then Compton has a successful future.

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One of his historical moments was that he attended one of the HBCU’s (Historical Black College and University). He also witnessed the Watts Riots and saw the change in the community. He was held with high honors as a teacher here at El Camino Compton Center.

Mr. Estrada was born and raised in Compton, California, with his parents and siblings. He attended Centinela Valley High School at that time, until they built Centinela High for Compton, Lynwood, and Willowbrook students in the community of 300,000 students for years to come. Compton Community College was established in 1927, as a component of the Compton Union High School District in 1950. Classes began on the new campus in the fall of 1956, Compton Community College District an area about 29 square miles making educational services available to all students in the surrounding area. Today about 240 full and part-time faculty teach more than 40 degree programs and 20 certificate programs. In November 2001, Measure CC issued a $100 million bond to upgrade classrooms, labs, and safety repairs. Now stands a new nursing building. This facility opened in the summer of 2016 next to our campus daycare. This structure of our campus is a site full of ambiance and tranquility.

Compton: Making the Connection
by Jessica Arellano

The city of Compton has been made out to be a city full of gangs, crime, and poverty. At one point, this city was full of all of these things. However, within the past two decades there has been a substantial drop in the crime rate. Compton’s mayor, Aja Brown sat down in a recent interview and discussed these rates. In the interview, Corey Takahashi asked Mayor Aja Brown what her view was on Compton’s future and well-being. Takahashi herself writes, “Brown cites statistics that show the difference between Compton of the 1980s and now: In 1989, the city recorded 86 homicides. As of our interview, she says, it’s only had seven this year. ‘Our violent crime has gone down 50 percent, even in the last year. And over the last 20 years, crime is down 71 percent’” (NPR). Stereotypes and generalizations have been made by people across the globe based on what they hear about Compton. Only people who live in Compton, or attend schools in the city, can make factual statements. Some people who lived in Compton during its roughest times used these hardships to their advantage. Instead of wallowing and hiding in fear, they kept Compton close to their heart and strived to make a better life for themselves. El Camino College Compton Center obtains an individual who grew, prospered, and continues to give back to the city that started it all for him. This man is Jose Villalobos.

I had a chance to sit with Jose Villalobos and discuss his life and the connections he has with Compton. No, he wasn’t born and raised in the city. Jose’s life began in Michoacán, Mexico, where he was raised by his mother and father. He spent most of his youth in Mexico until he and his family moved to California his last two years of high school.

Only two days after graduating, he started his life in Compton, California. Being so new to the country, it was a tough experience to move to a new city. After the summer had passed, he started his journey at El Camino Compton Center. It was the year of 1994 when Villalobos walked on campus eager to start learning about mathematics. Through hard work and dedication, he successfully obtained an AA from ECC Compton Center. Villalobos didn’t stop his education there. He went on to CSULB and then received a Ph.D. from USC in mathematics. While reminiscing on his golden years, he also discussed how the city and campus used to be around the late 90s. After this interview, it was made very evident to me how much change has occurred since he attended this campus.

While Villalobos attended ECC Compton Center, it was actually called “Compton College”. On an informative section located on the ECC website, you can find out more history on the campus. In this section, they write, “It wasn’t till 2006 that the name of the campus changed. From then, August 2006, the El Camino Community College District Board of Trustees approved a Memorandum of Understanding to provide educational and related support services to Compton Community College District residents” (ECC). Compton College changed for the better and received a $100 million bond that allowed the campus to upgrade its technology and buildings. Villalobos unfortunately recalled how the campus struggled while he was there. He talked about the
buildings and classes and said, “While I was a student here, there was no library building. There wasn’t even a math and science building. Every math class I took was located in the E building. The campus has received so much remodeling” (Villalobos). Today, the campus has beautiful new buildings including a new library along with a math and science center.

As we talked about Jose’s past, he spoke about his father and the unconditional love and support he received from him. Jose’s father wasn’t the typical Latino dad. He pushed Jose to go to school after graduating and focus on his education. In many cases, it’s common that Latino fathers raise their sons with an important lesson on working and becoming a man. The move from Mexico to California wasn’t easy, but the move here is the reason Villalobos obtained a higher education. If it weren’t for his dad, he could have never reached the goals and dreams he has met and for that he is forever grateful to him.

One of Jose’s happiest memories of being a student at Compton College was the basketball championship games: “The whole school got together and showed pride and spirit everywhere. It was loud and intense with fans showing support for their school” (Villalobos). School spirit has always made him feel uplifted. It reminds him of the community we all feel while supporting our campus. Currently, students at our school have a problem with showing support for the school. Many people don’t communicate with other students and tend to not participate in school activities. Villalobos agrees and said he, too, thinks students used to be more involved with events on campus. Now, he feels that students don’t come together as much as they used to.

In the 90’s, the majority of people who lived in Compton were African-American. Villalobos can recall the ethnicity ratio while he attended Compton College. He says, “While I was here, which was 1994-1996, most of the students here were black. The amount of students left were Hispanic and some Samoan. Villalobos recalls, “You didn’t see white people on campus and the ethnicity war between Hispanics and Blacks was very active” (Villalobos). Discrimination and judgement were two things that the people of Compton had to face daily. It was a battle of two races which ended up in multiple deaths. While Villalobos was a student, Compton was facing high crime rates and wars between two ethnicities. Being Latino, Villalobos kept to himself and had to make sure to always keep his guard up.

A tragic incident occurred on November 2, 1994. This was the year that Villalobos attended Compton College. There was a Halloween party that ended with two fatalities. Writer Isaac Guzman for LA Times published an article when the two boys were shot. Guzman writes, “Standing in the middle of a now-quiet Compton street, Danayne Ashorn holds a 9-millimeter shell casing that may have been wrapped around the bullet that killed her son, Frank. A thick swath of dried blood remains on the sidewalk where he died. Ashorn's son, Frank Isaac Martinez, 14, and his friend, Jose Zermenio, 15, attended a Halloween party Monday night called "Monsters in the Closets." A recording directing people to the house in the 1200 block of North Spring Street requested that party-goers ‘come in peace’” (Guzman). Gangs and violence filled the streets of Compton; it had a huge impact on the younger groups. In a scholarly journal, Josh Sides explains why gangs appeared in larger amounts in the city. He writes, ‘Far more troublesome, however, than Compton teenagers' tendency to ‘hang their heads,’ was their propensity to join street gangs. Coinciding, and undoubtedly fueled by, the decline in legitimate employment opportunities was the explosive rise in black street gangs in Compton and throughout black Los Angeles” (Sides). Innocent people, including kids, were now being shot senselessly due to the high amount of gang violence. The lives of two boys ended that night and police believed it might have been gang related. Guzman concludes his article by writing, “A gang war between rival black and Latino gangs has been going on in the area for more than a year, according to community activist Lorraine Cervantes. Compton police detectives believe that the shooting may have been gang-related, but they did not know if Frank or Jose belonged to gangs” (Guzman). Completing college while facing the streets of death and danger is something Villalobos can say he’s accomplished.

The city of Compton didn’t start as a city with a bad reputation. At first, the majority of people who lived there were white. Decades later, the city of Compton evolved into a city with crime and gangs. In a book titled Death of a Suburban Dream: Race and Schools in Compton, California, Emily Strauss discusses the changes Compton has made throughout schools and the city. She believes the city, “evolved over time from the complex intertwined relationship among racial inequality, economic opportunity, community culture, and educational policy” (Strauss 3). Change is good, especially in this case. Crime has dropped 70% in the past two decades. Jose Villalobos doesn’t live in Compton anymore, but he always remembers the life he had in the city. Since he’s graduated Compton College, he’s returned back to campus. This time, however, he’s not a student. Professor Villalobos is now a mathematics teacher at the new and improved ECC Compton Center. He’s turned down multiple job offers from schools located in Florida, Chicago, and California as well. His reasoning? To give back to the city and school that started the life he now lives. Wherever he goes in life, and wherever anyone from this campus goes, Compton will always be a connection deeply rooted in them forever.

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**Compton's History**

by Ana Padilla

The city of Compton we know now used to be very different in the mid-1800s. Before then, it used to be nothing but land, but then in the year 1867, a man named Griffith Dickenson Compton led 30 pioneers into the territory with the sole purpose of settling down. Now, originally, the city was known as Gibsonville, but only for a short period of time. Then later on, it became known as Compton, in the year 1869, but it only became official on May 11, 1888, and had a population of only five hundred people. The person I interviewed, named Christian Castillo, has said to have noticed many changes in the city of Compton and its citizens that have lived here. Christian mentions things he has learned to love about this city and how Compton has helped him become a better person.

In the beginning of the year 1950, the first African Americans moved into the area. This is when Centennial High School was built to help and accommodate the growing population of the students in the area of Compton. Christian mentioned that he went to Centennial High School for the remainder of his last two years in high school. Christian talked about how he noticed how the riots and fights had been decreasing in those two years he had at Centennial. He also mentions how the teachers say that many more students are graduating from that school with good grades and more with honors. Sides writes: “Compton’s superior racially integrated schools, he observed a much better crop of black students than ones found in the ghettos of Watts or South Central” and “Compton has become a city which sends its Negro high-school graduates to state colleges, to Berkeley and UCLA, and some even can afford to go as far away as Fisk” (Sides 15). This can show anyone that the City of Compton has progressed in being able to send their children to important universities. This is Christian’s dream, to go to a university and play professional baseball. This is why Christian is currently in El Camino...
way when it comes to being united as a whole. Yes, we still have racism in Compton, but not as much as we used to, back in the day. Christian mentioned how when his grandfather used to live in Compton how a riot would start out of nowhere, and it would always be African Americans vs. Latinos. According to Camarillo: "Realtors and homeowners alike largely kept blacks from penetrating Compton city boundaries until the 1950s" (Camarillo 10). So in a way, even after that, African Americans and Mexicans were still trying to make the other leave even though both are part of the same minority group. As of today, Christian has noticed a big change in the way African Americans and Mexicans treat each other nowadays and how everyone can become closer together with a small thing as a sport to show we all can have something special in common.

Christian said he has gone to several events like meetings, speeches, and rallies concerning Black Lives Matter. Christian himself said that him being half African American matters greatly to him, so he himself feels like it is a good thing to assist in these events to show support and to show that we are connected as a union. To show that we refuse to go back to the way things were back in the day when segregation was still a strong belief. Sides writes: "Rallying behind the slogan ‘Keep the Negroes North of 130th Street,’ militant defenders of Compton's whiteness were incredibly successful. As late as 1948, even as a wave of African American immigrants flooded Los Angeles, Compton's segregationists held the day: of a population of forty-five thousand, fewer than fifty were African Americans” (Sides 8). Even before the African Americans officially moved into the City of Compton, the whites were already trying to run them out and keep them away. Compton has come a long way in the subject of segregation. People have learned to get along with one another, and this is the way things should continue to be. Christian mentions how he has to live here without his parents because his parents live in another state. So him being alone here, he wants to have the knowledge that it is safe for him to be out and about around the city of Compton without having fear. Compton has become a city that is home to many races, not just one.

As mentioned previously, Christian lives in Compton by himself and doesn't have any family members with him. The rest of his family lives in New Jersey, and Christian now shares an apartment with one of his friends. His family decided to let him move here for the sole purpose of Christian fulfilling his career goal. From what he said, his family was nervous about letting him live here because of all the rumors and things people hear of Compton in the news. However, back in the day, here in Compton, African Americans that went to school here and lived in the area were considered as middle class. They also represented as blue-collar employment meaning they had the labor work, the jobs that not many people wanted to have. But now things have changed where more of Compton's residents are becoming more successful. Also, back in the day, when things were starting to get better for Compton, people that lived here started having good thoughts on their city. Sides writes: “For Compton's residents, the city was far from ghetto,” meaning, for most, Compton was a great place to live, where streets and house looked nice and clean, but from what people hear in the news it’s hard to believe that's what Compton is now (Sides 16). However, Christian says he doesn’t regret coming to live here for a better education, and he says he will continue to remain in this city pursuing his goals in life.

In conclusion, the city of Compton has been improving since day one, when Griffith decided to settle here for the very first time. Compton has faced its ups and downs, but in the end it has been able to continue thriving in this world. People just need to make sure we continue to make it a better place, a place where people can be proud to be from Compton. People like Christian, who love Compton, help the city look good and help give it a good name. Even if in the past Compton has had its rough edges, people must learn about the history on how it came to be, to fully comprehend the value their city actually has. Christian being a person who knows the value of Compton will be a person that will become a great person to this city. Compton is an amazing place if people can help make changes and learn about the beautiful history on how it came to be.

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90 Year Old Compton College
by Jimmy Torres

Compton College has been around since 1927, and in 2017, it will celebrate its 90th anniversary. It’s interesting how the college has been around for longer than most of the staff and students in the college. Professor Mohammad Khalilzadeh has had the opportunity to be a student and a professor at Compton College and during our interview he was able to share with us experiences from both his past and his present, as a student and a teacher. Today, I will talk a little about his life and
some of the experiences that he’s had at Compton College. I will also talk about some school events and the unfortunate loss of accreditation.

Professor Khalilzadeh started at Compton College in 1978 which was back when he was 18. He shared with us that his whole family attended and graduated from Compton College. This included his wife, brother, and two sons. I was surprised when he mentioned that his brother became a physician and that his son became a director of operations for a company. I personally thought it was awesome how his whole family came to Compton College and all of them became successful. He let us know that we can be successful, too, as long as we continue our education. This is one example of the many professors at Compton College that encourage and motivate their students to work hard and reach their academic success. Mr. Khalilzadeh came here as an international student from Iran, and he began his education with Compton College because it is more affordable to go to a community college and then transfer to a four-year school than to just go straight into a 4-year school. After he graduated from Compton, he then transferred over to Cal State LA where he later earned his bachelor’s then his master’s degree. In 1998, he began to teach in Compton College and has been there ever since.

Mr. Khalilzadeh said getting to where he is today wasn’t easy. He was working at a full time job and going to school full time, sometimes even taking more than 4 classes a semester. That must have been pretty hard because some people find it difficult to work full time and be a part time student. Back in 1978, he mentioned how he had to pay for his college tuition and that Cal State LA units were $53 each. This is pretty cheap compared to today which is $372 per unit (Cal State LA). However, Professor Khalil did say the minimum wage at the time was $3 per hour, so $53 back then was a lot more than it is today. He encourages students to not only go to school full time, but to also take as much classes as one could take. He said “the faster you finish, the sooner you get a good job and the sooner you get better pay” (Khalilzadeh). Throughout the interview, he kept reminding us to keep moving forward with our education because it will pay off, and it will give us a better future. One of the reasons why Professor Khalilzadeh inspires his students so much is because back when he was a student in Compton College, professors would inspire him to keep going and finish his classes as fast as he can, and he did. A year and a half later, he graduated from Compton College and had transferred to Cal State LA.

Some significant historical events Professor Khalilzadeh remembered while going to Compton College was the hostage crisis between Iran and the United States in 1979. Professor Khalilzadeh is from Iran which he explains was very difficult for him because people would tell him the f-word and tell him to go back to his home. He compared it to 2017 issues with Donald Trump and immigration. Going to school can be difficult and having people there telling you, “you’re not welcomed,” I could only imagine would make things harder. Still, Professor Khalilzadeh persevered and continued with his education. Other than that, there wasn’t much he remembered since he was only at Compton College for a short amount of time. One of Professor Khalilzadeh’s favorite places to be on campus was the cafeteria and surrounding grass area. He remembers the campus and those areas were always full of students. Nowadays, the campus doesn’t ever seem to be full. From the looks of it, it just seems like there are a couple people trying to get to classes. The reason he liked the area was because the international students would hang out there, and that’s where they had their chance to talk about their cultures and debate on different ideas. Professor Khalilzadeh mentions that when he was a student, the campus was full of students ready to interact with each other, not like compared to today where technology has taken over.

Professor Khalilzadeh also let us know that when he was a student in school, 20-30% of the students were international students. Today, he says, “there are no international students; most of the students at Compton College are now 70-80% Hispanic and 30%-40% African American” (Khalilzadeh). This makes sense because Compton College is in a competition for students with 4 other community colleges.

I remember when I was a student in high school, and I was trying to decide which school to go to. I remember hearing from my friends, teachers, and counselors to avoid Compton College, that Compton College was a bad school for kids with nowhere else to go, and right after high school, I decided to go to LBCC to become an electrician. This could be why the student demographics of the school have changed. Sometimes, word of mouth can influence whether a person chooses one place over the other.

During our interview, we also talked about some of Compton’s history. He lets us know that before Compton Town Center, there was an auto dealer on that lot. I think Compton getting a shopping center is a lot better than having an auto dealer because a shopping center brings more people to Compton, which means more money for the city, which can then be used for the community, like the schools. He also mentioned that the Compton Courthouse was around back when he was in school and that they called it the “elephant house” because of its size.
We also asked Professor Khalilzadeh if he could share some of his favorite memories, and he did. He mentioned he was on the volleyball team, which I was surprised to hear because I didn’t know there was a volleyball team at Compton College. Some of his favorite memories as a faculty member are the student graduation ceremonies. He mentioned that he never attended any of his graduating ceremonies, but that he enjoys watching his students graduate. He said he would rather see his students graduate and see them moving up in life than have $100,000. Seeing them earn their degree is one of the best rewards he could receive.

Towards the end of the interview, he let us know of some the improvements that Compton College is working on. He told us that the school will be bulldozing the ugly bungalow buildings on the north side of the campus, to build a new modern building. It’s interesting to note that those bungalows are pretty old. They have been here since the campus first opened back in 1927 (Johnson). It’s no wonder they look run down; they’re 90 years old. Bringing a new building to the campus will definitely help bring in new students to Compton College, which will then mean more revenue for the school. A lot of people judge a book by its cover, but that shouldn’t be the case with Compton College. The school may not look so great because the old rundown buildings, but the professors here are great, and they actually care about their students. For example, last semester my public speech professor Mrs. Rios gave the entire class her personal cellphone number in case they had a question on an assignment or needed help working on it. Another example is my human development professor Dr. Roza; she made it her mission to see that every student in her classroom learned how to apply for financial aid and scholarships. She said she knows the struggle of trying to get an education without money, and she wanted to make sure that her students were aware of the resources that were available to them. During our interview Professor Khalilzadeh mentioned that “a good number of the teachers have opportunities to work in other places, but they choose to stay at Compton College because they feel like they make a difference”.

A couple of corrupt individuals could mess up a school. Unfortunately, the school did lose its accreditation back in 2005. According to ProQuest, there were reports of a “Compton College employee stealing federal student aid money.” There were also reports of college trustees stealing public funds, and “putting personal items on college credit cards” (Hong). People like that were part of the reason why Compton lost its accreditation. They not only stole money from a low income community, but they also contributed to the stigma that Compton College is a bad place. Professor Khalilzadeh was around during the battle to keep accreditation, and he explained how the teachers and the community were trying to make a difference and trying to make a change but that the problem wasn’t the community or the teachers. It was the management at the time. The books and curriculum the school was using he says “were up to date and as good as the books and curriculums in other colleges around the area” (Khalilzadeh). Personally, I like to see it like this; in order to save a sinking ship, you need all hands on deck. We can’t afford to have people making more holes. After the school lost its accreditation, El Camino College agreed to manage the operating and administrative duties for the college until Compton got back its accreditation. And that’s where Compton College is at right now. It’s working on getting back its stamp of accreditation. Sometimes, it takes a really bad break up or loss to finally realize something needs to change. What I mean by this is maybe we could look on the bright side of the college losing its accreditation. It got the attention of the government, which led to an internal investigation, which led up to the corrupt individuals being caught and then prosecuted. Then, after that, according to Lozano, the college received higher enrollment numbers, which is good for the school. The good news regarding the matter is that the school didn’t close down, and the community and the students still have a school to go to.

In conclusion, Compton College is an old campus, 90 years old to be exact, but just because the school is old, and it lost its accreditation, doesn’t mean it isn’t any good. Compton College is a great place for anybody to get an education. They have a wide array classes, subjects, and programs. The professors at the college care about their students. The buildings may not be the nicest, but the college is working on that. The school is also working on getting its accreditation back. At first, I myself wasn’t too sure about the school, but after my first semester here, I know I could proudly recommend this school to my friends and family.

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Red White and Blue
by Traci Reeder

To this I owe my life the cross who, shed the blood that paid the cost. This land was made for me and you, let’s examine what makes this true.

For those who served had one goal in mind, To fight for a cause, you say is blind. Oh justice? She has a name, The scale she holds tilts in shame.

O now we can go on to much more than that, How about the lives that were saved by Dr. Black? You know, “those people” who saved your life, Those who learned to read and write? Like the one before you, he had such class, He gave hope to those from generations past.

So, for those who think their blood is true, Guess what my friend? Ours, Bleed Red White and Blue!

Entries *

Registered students can use the following steps to send up to three contributions:

2. Select “Create Account” or, if returning user, “Login” and “Enroll in a Class”
3. Access Code: 7779516
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