



# N E W S

---

**El Camino College | Public Relations & Marketing Department**  
**16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, CA 90506**  
**Contact: Ann M. Garten, Director, Community Relations**  
**Telephone: (310) 660-3406 | E-Mail: [agarten@elcamino.edu](mailto:agarten@elcamino.edu)**

**For Immediate Release**

**May 19, 2011**

## **Media Coverage and Publicity Generated for Compton Community College District's California Nisei College Diploma Project Receives Top Honors**

The Compton Community College District, through the efforts of the El Camino College Public Relations and Marketing Department, has been awarded first place in the "Media Success Story" category for the successful media coverage and publicity generated for the California Nisei College Diploma Project. The award was presented by the Community College Public Relations Organization (CCPRO) last month.

A CCPRO Award represents the highest mark of achievement for marketing, public relations and government relations professionals in California's 112 community colleges. The "Media Success Story" was judged for stated media/publicity goals and objectives, strategies developed to meet goals, amount and quality of media coverage, and overall impact.

One CCPRO judge noted, "It is a media success story that really ticks all the boxes! It is emotional, it is about families, it is about righting wrong, it is about education and it is about caring." Another judge commented, "Well-executed plan with remarkable results; well done!"

The ECC Public Relations and Marketing team successfully implemented targeted media outreach, as well as utilized news releases, a web page, and other marketing collateral to recognize former Nisei students (second-generation Japanese Americans) who had their education interrupted during World War II when they were ordered into internment camps as a result of Executive Order 9066. From the outset, the goal was to present these individuals with honorary degrees.

At the center of the campaign were a series of news releases capturing the poignant life stories of some of the honorees. The stories captured the resilience of honorees such as Tomomi (Tom) Murakami who spent three months in an internment camp in Rohrer, Arkansas, before going on to earn a Ph.D. in electrical engineering, establishing 11 patents and enjoying a long and distinguished career at RCA. Honoree Lawson Sakai and his family received safe passage to Colorado, but soon after relocating he volunteered to join the 442nd Regimental Combat Team where he served in Mississippi and later France. Wounded four times in combat, Sakai was awarded both a Purple Heart and two Bronze Star Medals; today he serves as the president of the Friends & Family of Nisei Veterans (FFNV) organization in Morgan Hill, Calif.

- more -

## **Nisei Diploma Project Wins Media Campaign Honor 2-2-2-2**

Honorees were also recognized posthumously, which was the case for accomplished journalist Miwako “Monica” (Oana) Miya. She and her family were forced to move to the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming. While there, Miya wrote a column about internment camp life titled “Mo’s Scratchpad” for the Heart Mountain Sentinel, the relocation center’s newspaper. She went on to become the Associate Dean of Student Affairs at Columbia University’s School of Journalism.

The public relations outreach for this campaign captured the attention of local media that included cable television outlets, as well as regional, local and Japanese-focused newspapers. More importantly, it helped the team achieve their goal and, ultimately, 43 former Compton Community College students received honorary Associate of Arts degrees from the Compton Community College District at a special ceremony last fall.

The honorees and their family members were emotionally moved and truly grateful for the experience. In many cases, the event was an opportunity for education about an important period in history, as well as a catalyst for tearful reunions of former classmates who hadn’t seen each other for nearly 70 years. The brother of a graduate wrote, “It was a moving experience for us and we shall never forget the honor you have bestowed on our sister. Our Shiroishi family 110th year reunion (with 300 people strong attending) will be in 2014 and we will make sure that this event is presented as a legacy.”

The son of another graduate commented, “The ceremony was not only an opportunity to gather with family, but it was an opportunity to reflect on the internment, the role of education in our lives, the injustice that can occur and has occurred in our immediate family, and the importance of keeping history alive.”

The CCPRO panel of judges included editors, writers, graphic designers and media producers. Judges awarded points to each entry based on predetermined guidelines. Based on the results of the judging, the CCPRO committee presented first, second and third place awards for each category as appropriate.

### **About El Camino College Compton Center**

El Camino College Compton Center is the community’s education solution offering a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year university or train for a career. Many classes are available and offered at an affordable price—fees are only \$26 per unit. The catalog and class schedule for day, evening, weekend and online courses is available on the Web site at [www.compton.edu](http://www.compton.edu) or may be picked up at Compton Center located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA. For more information, call 310-900-1600.

###