$393,000 in Scholarships Awarded at Saddleback College Ceremony

Mission Viejo, CA – A record-breaking $393,000 in scholarships was awarded to 209 students at Saddleback College’s 36th annual scholarship ceremony on Thursday, May 11th. More than 400 were in attendance in honor of both the scholars and the donors, including family, friends, and Saddleback College faculty, staff, and administrators. The 209 individual scholarships were donated by businesses, organizations, and community members, and the Saddleback College Associated Student Government donated $80,000 in scholarships and underwrote the expenses for the ceremony.

Records were also broken in the foundation’s scholarship endowments, with 65 endowed scholarship funds totaling more than $1.5 million. By comparison, the total three years ago was $748,149.

Dr. Tod A. Burnett, President of Saddleback College, stated, “Congratulations to our outstanding students who received scholarships and were recognized for their academic achievement, service to the community, leadership, and talent. The generosity of our donors made the entire event possible and I thank them for their support of Saddleback College and our students, who benefit greatly from the kindness of those who give so much to our college.”

The evening began with the presentation of the ASG President’s Award, which is bestowed to a student who has demonstrated excellent leadership at Saddleback College, and the Outstanding Student Award, which is presented to a student that has shown exemplary leadership, community involvement, and academic achievement. Nick Koscielski, a veteran who plans to pursue a degree in industrial/organizational psychology, was presented the President’s Award by Dr. Burnett. Mr. Koscielski, a veteran of the U.S. Navy and a peer mentor for other Saddleback veterans, has maintained a 4.0 GPA and will transfer to San Diego State University in the fall. Eric Bremen, a business administration major who plans to transfer to UC Berkeley’s School of Business and eventually earn an MBA, was awarded the Outstanding Student of the Year Award by Academic Senate President-Elect Bob Cosgrove.

Barry McCarthy, second vice president of the Saddleback College Foundation, presented the Linda Richardson Rice scholarship. A member of Saddleback College’s “first faculty” who started when the college opened its doors to students in 1968, Rice endowed more than $140,000 for scholarships for students who are majoring in or planning a career in education.

Saddleback College Foundation Board of Governors First Vice President Jim Leach served as the event’s Master of Ceremonies and presented the scholarship awards with assistance by: Dr.
Burnett; Dr. Mike Foudy, a member of the Saddleback College Foundation Board of Governors and Chair of the Scholarship Committee; Rocky Cifone, Dean of the Division of Business Science, Economics and Workforce Development; Nancy Padberg, President of the South Orange County Community College District Board of Trustees; Marcia Milchiker, Clerk of the South Orange County Community College District Board of Trustees; and Jordan Larson, Student Trustee. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, President Padberg provided the welcome address. Music was provided by the Division of Fine Arts Jazz Combo.

In addition to the presentation of scholarships, three alumni speakers shared their stories about how scholarships impacted their lives. Alexis Petrovich, a single mother, is the first in her family to go to college, thanks in large part to the scholarships she received at Saddleback. She will graduate from UC Irvine this semester. Scholarships also allowed Ann Reeder, a disabled veteran who established the college’s Women Veterans Unity Group, to attend college and pursue her goal to counsel those with mental health issues and drug and alcohol dependencies. The final alumni speaker was Samira Yaganeh, who worked part-time in the counseling office while she attended Saddleback with the help of scholarships. Yaganeh is currently studying psychology at UC Irvine and hopes to return to Saddleback as a full-time counselor.

The Saddleback College Scholarship Ceremony is an annual event that started in 1976, when 45 donors contributed just over $12,000 to some 60 students. Over the past 36 years, we have awarded a ground-breaking $4 million in scholarships to deserving Saddleback College students.

Located in Mission Viejo, Saddleback College provides quality higher education and training to the greater south Orange County community. Having served more than 500,000 students since 1968, Saddleback College offers more than 300 degree and certificate programs to help students reach their personal, career, and educational goals. For more information, please visit www.saddleback.edu.

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