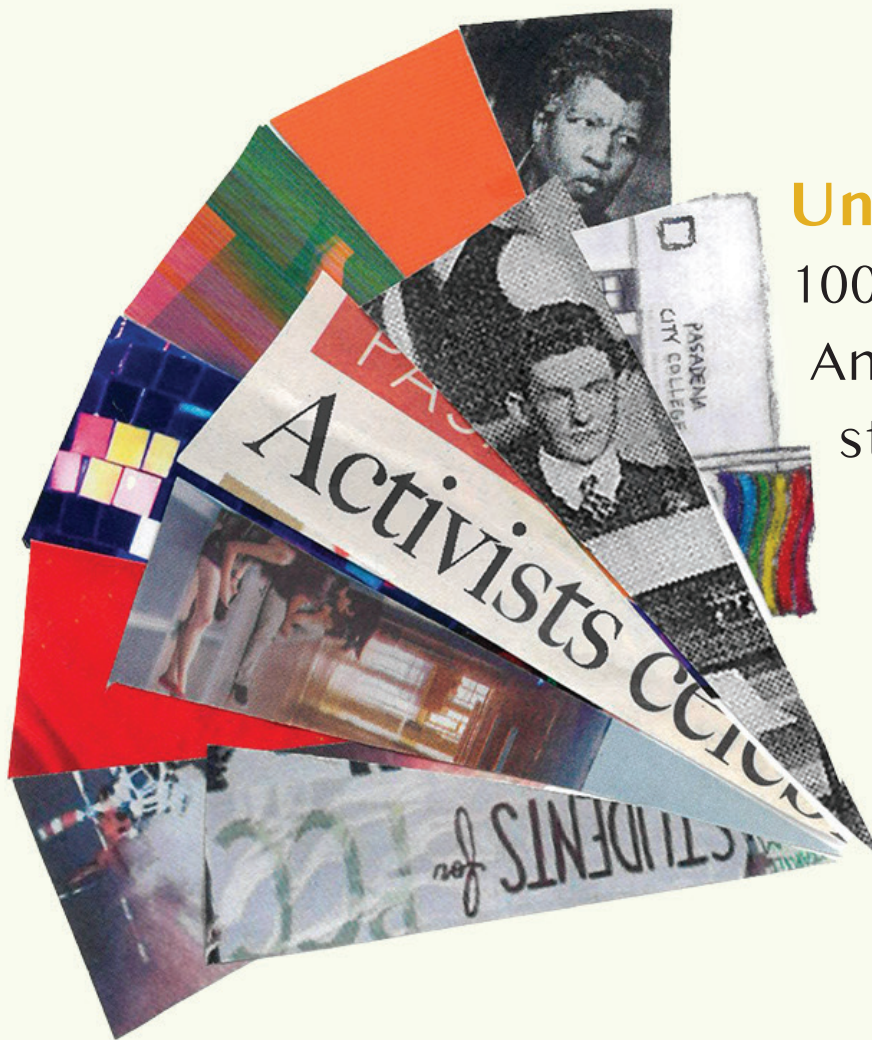


# SPOTLIGHT

MAGAZINE

A PASADENA CITY COLLEGE STUDENT PUBLICATION

Spring 2025



**Unprecedented Times:**  
100 years of  
American history  
still echoes in Pasadena



**PCC's FIRST  
FIREFIGHTER  
ACADEMY**

**STUDENT VISAS  
UNDER THREAT**

**Inside:**

Japanese internment  
9/11 and Muslim students  
The 1994 World Cup

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a black value system discovered b  
"We all started from the same pla  
so many different directions."

*The Courier news staff of 1973.*

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Mother of Afrofuturism, the lit  
journalism department at Pasade  
City College didn't always include  
The Third Wave Intersectional Fe  
is a space on the PCC campus

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# Staff



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LAURA DUX  
Special Thanks:  
Colin Haskins  
Kyle Winterboer  
Seamus Bozeman  
Linda Stewart and the Shatford Library



Eizen Yap

## Letter from the Editor

When I first pitched this issue’s theme, back in 2024, I was a little worried that maybe the concept only made sense to me. We knew it was the college’s centennial year, and we wanted to account for that. But, I kept telling everyone, I wanted the magazine to be about history *at* the college, not to be a history *of* the college. My colleagues and fellow students took that prompt and ran with it. They not only understood exactly what I was trying to say, but they amazed me with the stories they were able to find.

As the year changed over into 2025 and we faced one landmark historical shift in the United States after another, the theme of the magazine became more and more relevant. Every story we had drafted seemed fresh and relevant all over again. Things that had seemed like memories became imminent, and sharing them became imperative.

I am extremely proud of the work we’ve done putting this magazine together. It’s only the tip of a whole historical iceberg, but I like to think we’ve shone a guiding spotlight to help you find your way through the decades filed away in library archives. As for the future? Well, whatever awaits, take care of yourself.

Sincerely,  
Fern Rojas

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The bombing of Pearl Harbor changed the lives of Japanese students at PCC forever. Here, Laura Dux tells the story of the first Japanese American allowed to return to the West Coast.

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Anything that threatens the rights of one PCC student also threatens the whole student body. This publication stands in solidarity with our fellow students and the faculty looking out for us.

### You are not alone 44

As shifting attitudes on mental health discussions make information more publicly accessible, students have options with which to take care of each other and themselves.



# T R I P L E J

The purpose of the Triple J Club is to stimulate friendship and cooperation among the Japanese students of PJC, and to create greater school spirit. It acquaints the members with campus activities and with each other. Membership is open to all Japanese students, and the club is divided into three groups. The first consists of Japanese members from the United States, the second of those from Hawaii, and the last of Japanese from the old country. The Triple J acts purely as a social organization.

First row, left to right: SETSUKO ITOW, IKO TANZAWA, RUTH KIRITA (President I), NANCY EGAMI, MASAKI KURAKAWA. Second row: YOSHIE HASHIMATO, MARY TAGASHIRA, YOSHIKO NAKAMURA, HIRAKO MATSUMATO, FUMIKO TAKESHIGE, YOSHEKO KURAKAWA, MIDORI SATO. Third row: RUTH MATSUZAWA, YOSHIE KATO, KEIKO OQURA, MASAKO SHIDA, YASHIYE KAWAGUCHI, MARY WATANABE, DOROTHY IKEDA. Fourth row: JAMES SAKODA, SHIG MATSUMATO, WALTER NARITOMI, LOUIE IRIYE, TEIJI ITOW (President II). Additional members DR. HENRY I. WEITZEL (Adviser E), MR. ALLISON R. BALDWIN (Adviser W), SHIZUHO NAKAMURA, KENSHI YAMAMOTO, HELEN SUZUKI, TEIKO HOMMA, JOHNNY MITSUMORI, JAMES MITSUMORI, GILBERT YAMAMOTO, HATSUKO AKAMOTO, YOSHIO KONO, SACHIKO KUROKAWA, KENJI SHIGETONEL, AYAKO NAKATA, GEORGE SAITO, FRANK ITO, MAMORU MASAKI, MASAO FUYIKAWA, BOB ADA.



Club photo of the Triple J from Pasadena Junior College 1940 yearbook. Archive / Shatford Library

## A Pilgrimage Into The Past

by Laura Dux  
Photos by  
Luca Newman

“We American citizens of the United States are doing all we can to keep democracy alive.”

-Nisei gooby letter written for the Courier, 1942

Before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, there were 137 students of Japanese descent at Pasadena Junior College.

It was December 1941. Almost overnight, US troops were sent overseas and military groups began pressuring President Franklin D. Roosevelt to get rid of the large Japanese population on the West Coast. Executive Order 9066, declaring the forced removal and relocation of anyone deemed a threat to national security was signed by Roosevelt before it was spring.

The day after the order was signed, the Japanese ancestry social club at PJC called Triple J happened to have a scheduled party to welcome new students. They were still focused on school and plans for the semester. It seemed unlikely anything would come from it – most were American citizens.

The order had no language specifying race, but new Lieutenant General of the Western Defense Command, John L. DeWitt, quickly announced the forced removal of anyone of Japanese descent to be relocated into incarceration camps. There were no trials, no due process, and no crime committed except being Japanese.

PJC’s Superintendent President, Dr. John W. Harbeson, held an

all-campus assembly to advocate that Japanese Americans had no part in the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Rose Shoda Nishio, a PJC student, remembered that assembly in archive reporting from Rafu Shimpō.

“I was proud that someone was willing to stand up and support us,” said Nishio. “Nobody at PJC harassed us Japanese Americans, but many did avoid us.”

Harbeson also asked students of Japanese descent to meet with him for one-on-one meetings. Student Paul Tsuneishi thought it was pointless to go.

“I never went to that meeting,” Tsuneishi said. “I never showed up. I was not interested.” By April, students in the Triple J were saying goodbye to their school. PJC student Tamio Fujimoto wrote a farewell letter to her peers and published it to the Courier.

“We Japanese in the State of California and in other states, many of us American citizens are eager and ready to cooperate with the government in carrying out this plan,” the letter reads. “And so, we American citizens of the United States are doing all we can to keep democracy alive.”

Four months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, no students of Japanese descent were enrolled at PJC.

Before the war, high school student Esther Takei helped her parents with their carnival business on the Venice Pier. There were games of throwing baseballs at milk bottles, a pond filled with wooden fish with winning numbers hidden in their bellies, and a huge octopus ride where kids would be lifted off the ground and twirl in the air.

But Esther’s father was once the PTA president for her Japanese school. The FBI arrested him and took him away in February of 1942.

Esther and her mom packed suitcases. They were told they were going into the ‘wilds of America,’ so mom bought her coveralls from the JC Penny in Santa Monica. Esther said goodbye to the two family dogs. She would never see them again.

They lived in barracks built on the Santa Anita race tracks in Arcadia for the first months. The new streets were named after famous racehorses, like Man O’ War or Seabiscut. Some lived in the stables of once prized horses. Others slept on hay beds. At one point there were 18,500 people living in the Santa Anita detention facility. They all used the same communal showers.

By the fall, her father was returned by the FBI and the family was moved again to the Granada concentration camps in Colorado,



which became known as Amache, leaving their entire life they built in California behind.

**The journey from** the west coast to the incarceration camps still happens to this day.

On an early spring morning, hundreds of people take the four-hour journey from Los Angeles to Manzanar – the closest of the ten main camps to reach in a day’s drive in Southern California. The pilgrimages to Manzanar began in 1969 when a group of 150 intergenerational Japanese Americans made up of mostly students took the trip. Since the 1990’s, PCC has funded their own bus to take students and faculty thanks to Carrie Afuso, a faculty member at the Office of Student Life.

The pilgrimage to Manazar is one that would be considered reflective of the past. But at the ceremony, speakers only focused on present issues. An Indigenous speaker shared the rights for land use in the Central Valley. A Palestinian speaker called for action for the humanitarian crisis and genocide in Gaza. In the pamphlets for the ceremony, there was a short essay from an immigration lawyer on witnessing the abuse and hunger strikes at the Adelanto Detention Facility, California’s largest private prison for immigrants.

Under the snowy caps of the Sierra Nevada mountains and a perfectly blue sky, it’s easy to get lost in how breathtakingly beautiful the landscape is. It’s almost easy to forget that anything else happened here. Then the crash of a taiko drum hits and a speaker’s voice wails from the monitors.

“We must remind Americans that we the people must uphold

human and civil rights for everyone,” the speaker yells. “This is why we return to Manzanar.”

In another California desert during the 2024 campaign trail, President Donald Trump offered not-so-new solutions to deal with immigrants.

“I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to target and dismantle every migrant criminal network operating on American soil,” Trump said. “We are going to throw them out so far you wouldn’t believe it. If they come back into our country, it’s an automatic 10 years in jail with no possibility of parole. And if that doesn’t work, it’ll be 20 years. And if that doesn’t work... I guess it’s going to be the death penalty, right?”

**As the war went on,** there were a few resettlement efforts to allow Japanese Americans to continue their education outside of the camps. The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, NJASRC attempted to work with the US military and government to let students enroll in college. They were able to send 4,000 Japanese Americans from the

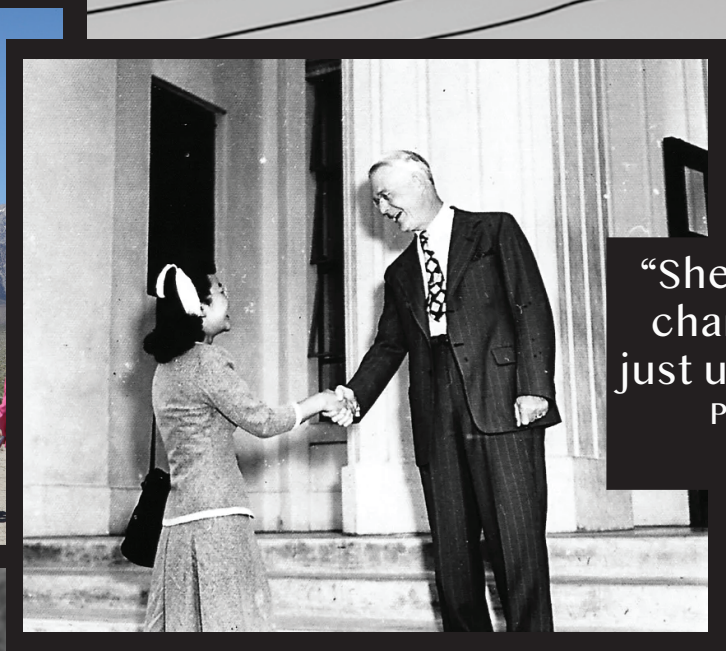
camps to continue their education – as long as it wasn’t on the west coast. Camp newspapers published weekly who was leaving camp and going to what school.

Esther tried to get residency in Boulder, Colorado to attend college there, but her father asked her to come back to help the family. She wrote for the camp newspaper, The Pioneer. She had her own column and drew silly comics of a little girl named Ama-chan who would get into mischief with the other kids on camp. They called her “the Pioneer’s sole girl reporter.” She thought about studying journalism when she went back to school.

In the summer of 1944, a family friend of the Takei’s, Hugh Anderson, visited Amache camps along with his friend William Carr to propose a plan to Esther. Carr was a founder of a group in Pasadena called Friends of the American Way. Inspired by NJASRC, they wanted to showcase that Japanese Americans could be reintegrated into society quietly by enrolling one student at Pasadena Junior College. The idea was the student would attend to little notice and no harm. Later, the student’s enrollment would be released to the



According to the Manzanar Committee, the annual pilgrimage sees upwards of 1,600 attendees and visitors. Photo / Laura Dux



Esther and PJC Superintendent Dr. John W. Harbeson on the campus of PJC in September 1944. Archive/ Shatford Library

press to gauge the public’s reaction. Hopefully, piloting the way for everyone to be released from the camps.

While Esther and her parents agreed to her attending school in Pasadena, the fear didn’t hit until she was on the train ride back to California. She was 19 and traveling alone with service men and strangers watching her. She would be the first Japanese American allowed to return to the west coast and the first Japanese American student on PJC campus in almost two years. They called her ‘the test case’. Esther didn’t know why Anderson picked her. But PCC history professor Susie Ling thought choosing her was purely strategic.

“To me it was super obvious because of her attitude,” Ling said. “She was just this really charming gal. Esther is just unusually optimistic.”

Esther’s arrival to Pasadena was welcomed with a lack of fanfare, just as planned. She was greeted by the school’s Christian association, Anderson’s family who she would

“She was just this really charming gal. Esther is just unusually optimistic.”  
PCC history professor  
Susie Ling

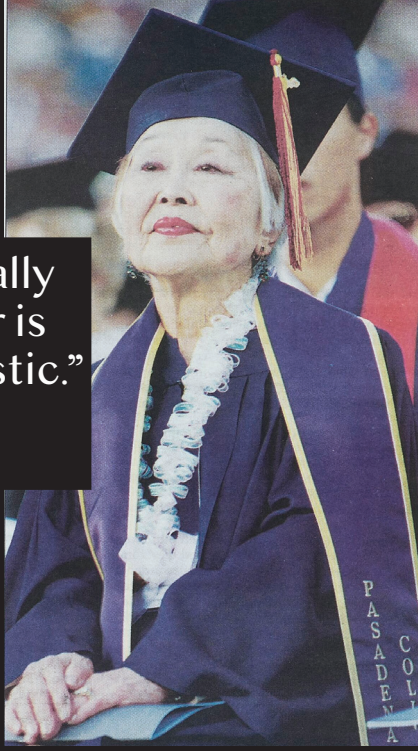
be staying with, and by the Editor-in-Chief of the Courier. The Courier published the story of a nisei student on campus and Esther’s quiet enrollment soon became national news.

Protests started at school board meetings from groups like the American Legion and Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, demanding for Esther’s removal. Reporters would enter Esther’s classroom and pull her out for interviews. During the height of the press frenzy, Anderson’s home address was leaked and Esther stayed with another family.

“It was interesting reading the articles and seeing how they would argue about having someone like me coming back, because they would consider me an alien,” Esther recalled in an interview in 1999 with the Japanese American National Museum.

“It took servicemen to point out that there is a difference. They were treating an American citizen in a very terrible way, and [servicemen] were fighting for all citizens.”

While there were protests and Pasadena locals who spat and insulted Esther, there were also friends who would fight back and defend Esther’s right to be there. Servicemen wrote



Esther’s graduation in 2010 / Nov. 2012 Courier archives

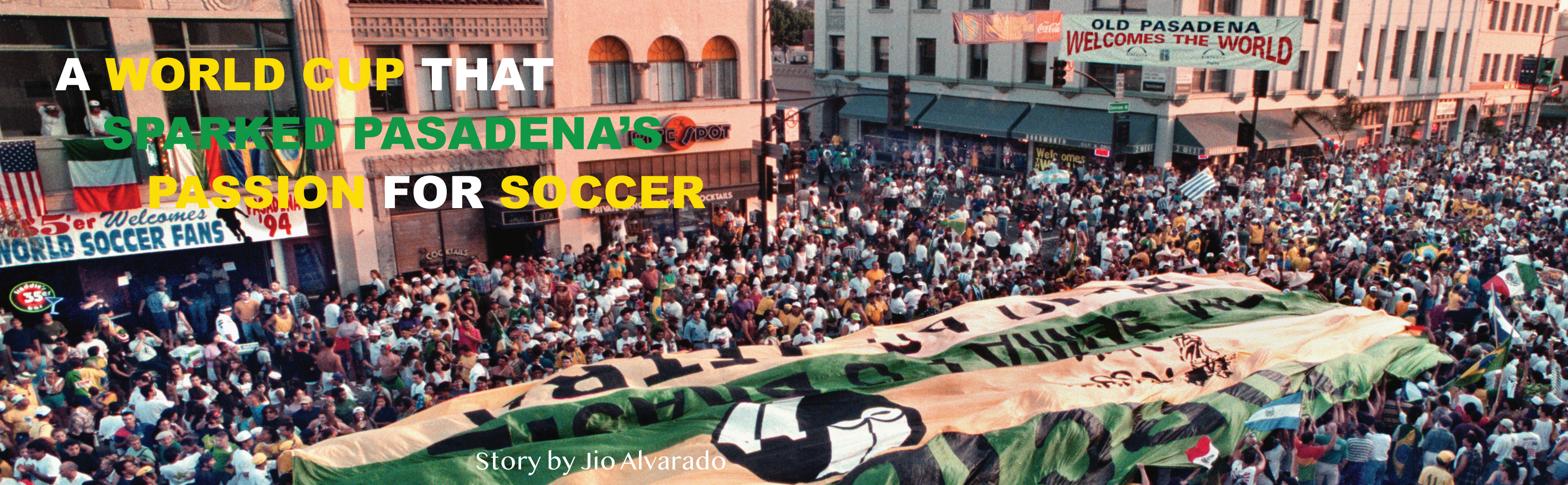
her letters of encouragement and offered to guard her.

Anderson and Carr kept advocating for the rights of Japanese Americans in the press. Esther’s school experience turned into her touring across the state giving speeches at churches and local colleges talking about her time in the camps.

After the war, life went on for Esther. She dropped out of college to support her parents, got married, and lived in Pasadena for the rest of her life. But in 2010, PCC held a Nisei graduation program, honoring PCC Japanese Americans who attended school during the war. Esther was 85 years old receiving her honorary college degree.

“Esther’s life dream was to earn a college degree,” said John Nishio, Esther’s son, in an interview with Ling. “She was pulled out of college in 1942 because of the war and risked her life to earn a college degree in 1944. I often saw her staring lovingly at that diploma for years.” ■





# A WORLD CUP THAT SPARKED PASADENA'S PASSION FOR SOCCER

Story by Jio Alvarado

An unbearable weight rests heavily on your shoulders. The hopes of more than 50 million people back home Italy rest squarely upon you, as a Rose Bowl venue filled to the brim with supporters and opposition stands in complete, suffocating silence. Another two billion people are watching globally. Make the penalty and you stay alive; miss, and your world crumbles.

Italian striker Roberto Baggio has been playing all 120 minutes of this World Cup Final on painkillers. He suffered a hamstring injury in the semi-finals against Bulgaria where he scored both goals to bring Italy to this very moment, but none of that is important now—only this penalty kick matters. He goes up to kick the ball and misses, misses the most important goal in his illustrious career. He stood still as the crowd erupted, with the

opposing Brazil football federation running to the field to hoist the World Cup trophy.

“I still don’t sleep well because of my mistake from the spot against Brazil,” Baggio said 25 years later in an interview with Sky Sport Italia. “I’d always dreamt of playing a World Cup Final against Brazil and making up for the one lost in 1970. However, dreaming is one thing and reality is another.

The significance of the World Cup is hard to overstate. For Baggio, a player who received the Ballon d’Or and the FIFA World Player of the Year awards, this tournament meant more than any accolade. Even 25 years later, he still loses sleep over his missed penalty. This kind of emotional attachment is unique to the World Cup—where triumphs and failures are woven into the very fabric of the tournament’s history.

The raw emotion and passion exuded by every fan, player, team, and nation at the World Cup tournaments aren’t the only reasons countries continue to bid for the honor of hosting the event, year after year. A financial and cultural incentive is also rewarded to the host nation of the tournament, as fans from across the world bring in revenue through touristic means in addition to sharing cultural aspects of living with food and tradition. With FIFA aiming to globalize the influence of soccer it lacked support of the sport within North America, specifically the United States of America. So when the USSF, United States Soccer Federation, made a bid to host the World Cup, on the condition it would establish the country’s first major outdoor soccer league since the demise of the North American Soccer League in 1984, it was a perfect

partnership for both organizations to get what each wanted.

The Rose Bowl’s selection as the venue for the World Cup final and seven other matches was a direct result of its world-class stature. Known for hosting major events like the 1984 Summer Olympics, its capacity and legacy made it an ideal location for FIFA’s ambitious goal of bringing soccer to the U.S. The decision meant that for a month, Pasadena City College’s backyard would become a global stage, with soccer fans from around the world converging on the area.

FIFA’s decision to go with the historic Rose Bowl in 1994 was not as etched into stone as many may be led to believe. Although it did offer an excellent track record of global events such as the Summer Olympics in 1932 and 1984—the latter of which brought huge crowds for the soccer matches—the

recent Rodney King riots in 1992 made members of the site selection committee skeptical of Southern California.

“The riots generated some questions on the site selection committee,” Alan Rothenberg, a Los Angeles lawyer who is president of the U.S. Soccer Federation, told the LA Times in 1992. “But they also created an attitude in Los Angeles to show the world that L.A. was still a great city and put it back on the map.”

Pasadena City College also reaped financial benefits from the World Cup, securing a \$100,000 deal with Five-Star Parking. This company, hired by the World Cup organizers, managed parking lots and handled ticket sales. According to Phil Mullendore, the school’s police chief in 1994, campus cadets directed students and faculty to designated spots separate from those



Design editor Mikaela Perez and writer Jio Alvarado reenact a 1994 Courier photo. Photo / Eizen Yap, Original / Al Santana.





for the World Cup. During the event, over 3,500 parking tickets were sold, each priced at \$10—equivalent to about \$21 today after inflation.

“Because of our proximity to the Rose Bowl and downtown L.A., we’ve been used on several occasions as [a] supplementary parking site,” Mullendore told The Courier in 1994.

The 1994 World Cup proved to be a catalytic and transformative event for the U.S. and Pasadena City College, sparking a renewed passion for soccer and creating lasting legacies. The Rose Bowl became a symbol of soccer’s potential in a nation that had long been dominated by American football, basketball, and baseball. Before the World Cup, soccer had been a struggling sport in local schools, with PCC’s program shuttered due to budget constraints and low enrollment.

Both the men’s and women’s teams had been discontinued in 1983. The men’s team had finished the 1982 season with a 3-10 record, while the women’s team had a 4-1-1 record but didn’t even finish the season. A lack of local high school soccer programs contributed to the low turnout. For over a decade, no soccer was played at PCC.

Students and coaches made valiant efforts to bring the soccer programs back. Coach Bev Johnson made multiple attempts to get students to sign up through the Courier. Multiple student soccer clubs were established on campus with scheduled practice time, along with third-party competitions that weren’t associated with the school. Students such as Jorge Cornejo and Mauricio Cervantes in 1994 ahead

of the World Cup hoped that the tournament would shed light on the clubs and sport so that the school could compete once again.

In the years following the World Cup, PCC reintroduced both men’s and women’s soccer, tapping into the newfound interest in the sport. Local youth leagues flourished, and the school’s programs became a breeding ground for talent in the region. As the sport grew in visibility across the U.S., PCC’s soccer teams found their place on the map, consistently competing at high levels. The 1994 World Cup was a turning point,

“Women’s soccer is here to stay”

showing that soccer wasn’t just a global sport—it

had a future in the U.S., and PCC was ready to embrace it.

It took time for Pasadena City College to fully come back from its drought of being a soccer-less school. It



2025 Lancer midfielder, Charlie Gallardo  
Photo / Isidro Lopez

wasn’t until the year 1997 when Pasadena ended its 15-year hiatus and the Lancers were once again dribbling and shooting on the pitch. Then-Athletic Director Skip Robinson said it was in the school’s best interest to have a women’s soccer program, stating that other schools in their conference offered soccer and wanted to bring in local talent from the high school level.

“Women’s soccer is here to stay,” Robinson told The Courier in 1997. “We anticipate to have a men’s soccer team in a couple of years.” Only one year later, men’s soccer also returned to the school. Neither has left the school’s athletic department since.

Both soccer teams have concluded their 2024 seasons, the women’s team having an unprecedented historic run with a record of 19-2-2 in addition to a record-setting match win streak of 10 games and the deepest playoff run in school history. The men’s soccer team ended their season 15-9 having upset #2 state-ranked school rivals Mt. San Antonio during the playoffs.

The 1994 World Cup Final will always be remembered for the day that Roberto “Il Divin Codino” Baggio died standing still after his missed penalty against Brazil. However, the entire tournament also provided Pasadena City College students who craved soccer and aimed to emulate the very spectacular performances that took place a couple of miles away at the historic Rose Bowl, fueling them with hope and inspiring dreams of one day playing on their campus grounds. ■

EARTH,  
WIND,  
FIRE

*From quakes to storms, every environmental disaster has prepared PCC for the next.*

Three essays by  
Mitch Gaby, Christopher Galicia, and Joseph Lee  
Edited by Fern Rojas

I. Mitch Gaby

The Spring 2025 semester saw the opening of the long-awaited Armen Sarafian Building on the east side of campus. It was under reconstruction for over a decade. In 2012, reports found that the old U building was not up to seismic standards, and everyone was forced to evacuate for safety, including the Natural Science Department.

Earthquakes have been a constant part of the state throughout PCC’s 100-year history. Yet, in all the history of earthquakes in the region, no significant damage or destruction to the campus has occurred. Every quake and shake has toughened up PCC.

Through education, policy-making and yes, a little shaking, the college has grown to be a safe place for students in Pasadena and Southern California.

On March 10, 1933, Long Beach suffered a 6.4-magnitude earthquake that killed 120 people and devastated the Southern California region. The campus was far away from the earthquake, and only a handful of facilities were damaged. However, the overall impact of the earthquake damaged over 230 school buildings in California. Thirty days later, California Governor James Rolph signed the Fields Acts, which gave sweeping building codes for schools K-12.

The sky outside, captured by cell phone camera from the front door during the Eaton fire. Photo / Eizen Yap







These cramped-together tent classrooms were used instead of buildings for three years in the 1930s. Archive / Shatford Library

At the time, Pasadena Junior College was still an extension of Pasadena High School. As a result, the three original buildings at PCC were demolished off Colorado Blvd. There were no classrooms for three years, and classes were conducted in tents, dubbing the school “Tent City.”

“During the rainy season, students splashed around in mud and water and were compelled to sit through class in wet feet. Laboratory work was diminished since the tents could not be adequately equipped for demonstration purposes. The tents were very close together. Consequently, a student could very plainly hear what was going on in the neighboring tent,” said Mark Dodge from the 75th-anniversary commission of the History at PCC.

The city of Pasadena has a variety of active fault lines that could trigger another earthquake in the area. The closest fault line to PCC

**“During the rainy season, students splashed around in mud and water and were compelled to sit through class in wet feet.”**

Mark Dodge, PCC 75th Anniversary history commission

is the Raymond Fault, which caused a 5.0-magnitude earthquake in Pasadena. PCC was also affected by the 1987 Whitter-Narrows earthquake caused by the Puente Hills Fault, a blind thrust fault.

“A blind thrust is a thrust fault that is buried under sediment that we don’t see and we don’t know about,” said Bryan Wilbur, assistant professor of geology. “Probably where this pops up most readily is that the Northridge Earthquake of 1994 was on a fault that most people didn’t know about.”

Wilbur is confident that while earthquakes will continue to exist in the area, PCC and the L.A area is safe because of the measures that the state and the college make for student safety.

“Any risks are worth it to live here in Southern California. And that’s what I tell my students,” Wilbur said. “We have exceptional building standards. I’m not concerned about that. You can always lessen your risk by making sure that you’re

prepared for your earthquake when it does occur.”

### II. Christopher Galicia

In the final week of November 2011, news stations across Southern California issued a wind advisory, followed by a red flag warning later that day from the National Weather Service for the Los Angeles area. The storm, with Santa Ana winds equivalent to a Category 4 hurricane, left Pasadena in ruin after a two-day thrashing.

On the morning of Dec. 1, PCC’s cleanup process began being plagued by constant piles of debris, broken cars, and collapsed trees.

“We have trees that have to be



After the aluminum awning from Accurate Autoworks blew onto parked cars along Hill Avenue, Pasadena Fire Department arrived to clear the debris. Megan Carrillo / Courier

*From the Courier  
December 8, 2011  
Archive/Shatford Library*

## Santa Anas roar into town

removed, and there are light fixture caps blown out that need to be replaced,” Facilities electrician Brian Cazares told the Courier. “Behind the LL Building, the two gates were blown off, and there are doors that caved in because the wind shattered the hinges. On the bridge of the R Building, a tree fell and blocked the entrance to the W Building. The trees by the Bonnie entrance fell onto the power lines, and also had to pick up a lot of signs and canopies from vendors.”

Students Hector Villegas and Eddie DeFerrari were in class the night of the storm when long pieces of aluminum sheet metal from Accurate Autoworks became entangled around a light pole and landed on and around their cars. Villegas’s late-model Honda Accord had scratches on the fender and a door, and a dangling passenger-side rearview mirror.

“This place has been in business since 1941 and gets a good amount of service. You would think they would install a good roof, not some cheap thing you buy at Home Depot,” a frustrated Villegas said.

Further problems came about after 400,000 residents lost power, many for up to a week. The lack of preparation resulted in public outcry which led city officials to speak out regarding the concerns of Pasadena being ready for another windstorm hitting the city again in the future.

That fear became reality in 2025 when another windstorm, twice as strong, pushed the city beyond its limits. Even worse, this windstorm came alongside wildfires in the area. The resulting Eaton Fire would destroy multiple parts of the city.

With the benefit of modern technology, the city was able to send notifications keeping residents updated about the weather conditions,

air quality, and areas currently under alert of wildfire risk. Neighborhoods would receive advance notice of preparations to evacuate, and which evacuation center to report to.

While the fires across the state were the obvious focus of the media, the effects we saw were a direct consequence of the escalating winds. Governor Gavin Newsom aimed to take a more environmental approach in preventing further disasters caused by windstorms. Meanwhile, Los Angeles mayor Karen Bass issued an executive order to pave the way for Los Angeles residents to rapidly rebuild homes as a part of the city’s recovery plan. Her plan also involved an updated local emergency declaration for when dangerous wind conditions threaten additional homes going further.

“This unprecedented natural disaster warrants an unprecedented response that will expedite the



rebuilding of homes, businesses and communities,” she proclaimed. “This order is the first step in clearing away red tape and bureaucracy to organize around urgency, common sense and compassion. We will do everything we can to get Angelenos back home.”

Comparing the two windstorms, Pasadena showed an improvement in 2025 through properly notifying its citizens, but struggled when it came to a lack of resources through fire support.

III. Joseph Lee

“You really do become family.”

That’s how Madeline Woodman, class leader of Pasadena City College’s first Wildland Fire Academy, or Wildland Fire Academy 1, described the eight relentless weeks of training—weeks that “pushed every one of us physically, mentally, and emotionally,” forging a group of strangers into a unit shaped by fire.

By the end of the program, the unit, 38 strong, gathered to celebrate what they’d accomplished. Graduates shared food, stories, and smiles as they each received an Occupational Skills Certificate, officially qualifying them for seasonal positions as Type 2 wildland firefighters with the U.S. Forest Service.

Captain Jon Gustafson, one of the academy’s fourteen instructors, commended the class not only for their perseverance, but for the unity they showed in overcoming each challenge.

“They worked as a team,” said Gustafson. “They pushed through challenges together as a family, and today, they stand before us as the first graduates of this academy.”

For Woodman, that spirit of support wasn’t just a talking point; it carried her through her most difficult moments. In the first two weeks of training, she came down with a bad

case of the flu. Struggling just to get through the hours—from 6:20 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day—she questioned whether she was cut out for the role.

“When I was first asked to be class leader, I hesitated,” said Woodman. “I didn’t know if I had what it took. I wasn’t sure if I’d be the right person to lead this group, because, like most of us, I was still trying to find my own footing. But the truth is, leadership isn’t about having all the answers. It’s about being willing to grow alongside your team.”

The group that began as individuals from different walks of life transformed into something much more, a crew bound by early mornings, physical exhaustion, and the drive to keep going when things got tough.

“When you struggle together, that makes all the difference,” Woodman said. “Being able to struggle with someone makes you really understand what they’re going through.”

Not all of the struggles were serious. Some drills were, in their own way, downright ridiculous. Squadron leader Salvador Rubio recalled one of the more memorable sessions: a physical training exercise that involved duck walking across hot asphalt, chainsaw in hand, while screaming at the top of their lungs.

“I had never felt anything like it before. The exhaustion hit me hard, and I honestly thought I might pass out,” Rubio recalled. “The heat, the physical strain, the chainsaw... I could feel my body pushing beyond its limits. It was one of the toughest moments I’ve faced, but it also taught me a lot about mental toughness and the importance of pushing

through when you think you can’t go any further.”

But if some drills bordered on the absurd, others were grounded in the sobering reality of the job. The training took cadets across two locations, Pasadena and Calabasas, both of which had been scorched by the 2025 Los Angeles fires. The Eaton Fire swept through the hills in and around Pasadena, while the Palisades Fire burned in Calabasas, leaving behind charred hillsides and blackened brush. Training on grounds recently marked by disaster only added further weight to the academy’s work. For one cadet, the weight was personal. Their home was lost to the Eaton Fire, a constant reminder to the crew of what was at stake.

Moments like those, equal parts grueling and absurd, defined the academy experience; but so did the quiet, consistent efforts behind the scenes.

Among those that stood out was Ethan Banh, who the class voted as their Most Valuable Fire Cadet. Whether it was helping the class study for important exams or creating unofficial guides that made understanding the structure of the course more manageable, Banh quickly became a steady presence throughout the eight weeks.

“It was a very surreal experience,” said Banh. “I led a



Outdoor cadet training. Photo / Ethan Banh

Eli Lichter-Mark and his family, daughter Hazel and wife Alina, eat at the staircase during the first Wildland Fire Academy Graduation at the Creveling Lounge on Saturday, April 12, 2025. Photo / Eizen Yap

majority of the study sessions outside of class hours. Many of the cadets that stated they voted for me were also ones who have said that those study groups really helped them pass some of our exams.”

Banh also had a knack for turning inside jokes into moments of camaraderie. During a Costco run to pick up bagels for one of their field days, a classmate jokingly declared himself the “Bagel Incident Commander” or “Bagel IC,” a play on firefighting lingo. The joke stuck and Banh ran with it, designing a custom “Bagel IC” patch that over 20 classmates preordered.

Another graduate whose story spoke to the quiet resilience that defined the class was 39-year-old cadet Eli Lichter-Marck. His path through the academy wasn’t just about personal growth; it was deeply intertwined with his responsibilities as a father. His 4-year-old daughter, Hazel, remained at the center of every decision, even as the demands of training intensified. Lichter-Marck had been drawn to firefighting ever since the Woolsey Fire burned through Los Angeles and Ventura County in 2018.

“I was motivated to join the academy as a way to finally fulfill a lifelong dream to become a firefighter,” he said. “This is the first time I’ve legitimized my interest in a real way.”

Balancing the commitment meant navigating early mornings, physically grueling training days, and a carefully coordinated co-parenting schedule with Hazel’s mother, Alina. He cared for Hazel from Saturday afternoon through Wednesday morning. When she was at school, he used those hours to package honey,

manage sales for his small business, and squeeze in study time either before sunrise or after class.

“I’ve always known that managing bees and fighting fire were practices in alignment,” he said. “Both are forces of nature we ultimately can’t control.

You learn to stay sensitive to shifts in behavior and the environment—to work with them, not against them.”

Even amidst the chaos, moments with Hazel reminded him why he was there, not just for himself, but for the people he cared about. One evening post-graduation, Eli asked Hazel how she felt about his decision to partake in the academy.

“What do you think about me taking the fireman class?” he asked.

“Not good,” she responded matter-of-factly.

Eli chuckled. “Not good?”

Did she miss him? “No.” Was she proud of him? “No.” When Eli asked if she liked seeing him on stage with his classmates at graduation, Hazel clicked her tongue twice, her way of telling him that she approved. The same two clicks followed after he asked her if she liked his new “big boots,” a small but important milestone in his journey as a firefighter.

As the oldest cadet in the class, Lichter-Marck’s experiences as a father granted him a more mature perspective. In his classmates’ determination, he envisioned the same qualities he hoped to instill in his daughter.

“I could see that a lot of the students were taking chances and embarking on an unknown journey,”



he said. “There was some fatherly pride in seeing people take their destiny into their own hands. That’s what I always wanted for myself, and it’s what I want for my daughter.”

While the graduation ceremony marked the end of the academy, it also signaled the start of new journeys for each cadet. Some were headed to structure fire academies, others to seasonal jobs, and a few were already on track to join wildland crews.

The day before the ceremony, a few cadets started the celebration early with a trip to Surfrider Beach in Malibu. Known as part of a protected bird estuary, the beach is home to more than 200 species, including a lone pelican that found itself waddling into the group.

One cadet picked it up. It didn’t panic. After a few seconds, he put it back down, and it stuck around, still and unbothered, as if it didn’t mind the company.

The bond the cadets built wasn’t just about training or studying. It came from showing up for one another, day after day, in the middle of all kinds of chaos.

“They pushed through challenges together as a family,” said Captain Gustafson. And like any real family, what they built doesn’t end here. ■





**Squad 2**

# A family forged by fire: Inside PCC's first Wildland Fire Academy Photos by Eizen Yap



Zack Penalora and Hana Moore eating lunch during the first Wildland Fire Academy graduation at the Creveling Lounge on Saturday, April 12, 2025.



Riley Albert, Tyler Gradmick, David Chandroo, Zach Penalora, Guillermo Gonzalez, and Nathan Navarro hanging out during the first Wildland Fire Academy graduation at the Creveling Lounge on Saturday, April 12, 2025.



Many group photos were taken during the first Wildland Fire Academy graduation at the Creveling Lounge on Saturday, April 12, 2025.



Jon Gustafson, Madeleine Woodman, Dean Matthew Barbosa, Salvador Rubio, Andrew Perez, and Riley Albert present a plaque during the first Wildland Fire Academy graduation at the Creveling Lounge on Saturday, April 12, 2025.



**Setting Up and Hanging Out**





# SILENCE = DEATH:

*We will **never** know the full extent of HIV/AIDS impact on Pasadena*

by Fern Rojas

**October 23, 1986.** The front page of the Courier announces a blood drive on campus. Not remarkable, on its own. The college still regularly hosts blood drives today, after all. But what is remarkable is PCC president John Casey calling upon all students, faculty, and staff of the college to donate. The whole story—less than 300 words—seems intended to emphasize Casey’s call, quoting Red Cross representative Bob Manciero telling people not to be dissuaded by “AIDS hysteria.” You cannot, Manciero emphasized, get AIDS from giving blood.

## He was technically correct.

People who donate blood cannot contract HIV from donating. But over 35,000 people were infected with HIV from receiving blood donations, according to a report from PBS’s “Frontline” in 2006. By 1986 the blood banks were already contaminated, in part because it was underestimated just who could be carrying the virus.

The so-called Gay Related Immune Disorder, as it was called before 1983, was simply not seen as a threat to anyone outside of gay men. Even when heterosexual men and women would go to their doctors with symptoms, the possibility of HIV/AIDS was always dismissed, and alternative explanations would be assumed.

Even patients who died from AIDS, if they did not fit the stereotype of who could get the disease, would have their causes of death chalked up to alternative diagnoses.

Donations of blood from unknowingly HIV-positive people spread the disease to others who did not fit the AIDS patient profile of promiscuous gay men or homeless heroin addicts. Children as young as second-grade would contract AIDS from contaminated blood products, the “innocent victims” of AIDS. (Although, as New York activism group ACT UP would emphasize to people, all victims of AIDS were innocent.)

There is no way to be sure how many of the students, faculty, and staff of Pasadena City College in 1986 were HIV-positive. But in hindsight, pressuring the whole campus to stop worrying about AIDS and donate blood is shocking.

Of course, this particular blood drive was also one year after the Red Cross’s 1985 decision to ban homosexuals from donating blood at all. Perhaps Dr. Casey assumed that when he called upon all students, faculty, and staff of the college to donate blood that any homosexual students, faculty, or staff would already know they were exempt from his call. Perhaps Dr. Casey had assumed that there simply were no homosexual students, faculty, or staff in the first place.

**This lack of information** is typical of the entire history of AIDS. From the time of the first known case, documented at UCLA Medical Center in October 1980, to the discovery of the virus itself in Paris in 1983, and onwards into the late 90s, HIV has thrived on ignorance.

Dr. Michael Clark, an anatomy professor at PCC, recalls hearing about the research going on at UCLA where he had contacts.

“Back in those days, virology was so-so. There wasn’t a lot of research about viruses. HIV changed all that,” Clark said. “HIV was using an evolutionary approach to hide in the gaps of our knowledge, ensuring its survival.”

The national silence on the subject of AIDS is reflected in the Courier. Although AIDS was spreading with alarming speed between 1981 and 1985, both in the LGBTQ+ community and among immigrant communities of Black men and women, I could find no mention of AIDS in the Courier archives before 1986. Even the Courier’s supplemental Focus edition in June 1984, devoted entirely to the subject of health care on campus, doesn’t mention the disease once.

The iconic red awareness ribbon appears on the front page of the Courier on November 10, 1994, more than ten years after the virus reached California. Archive / Shatford Library

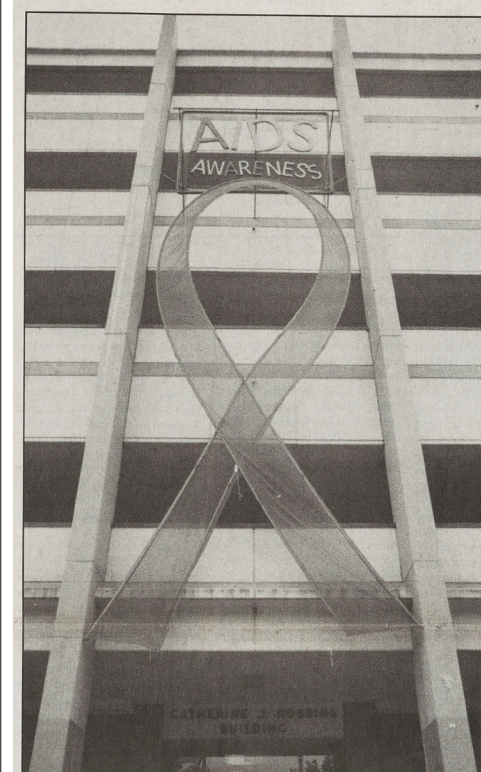
When I first started on this story, I had envisioned breaking down numbers to try and show a picture of the struggles of HIV-positive PCC students, hand in hand with learning what it was like to be an LGBTQ+ student in the late 80s. Early on in my reporting, I had reached out to Crystal Kollross, the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness at PCC. I had been told that if I wanted any information on statistics or data that related to students at PCC, she would be the one to ask. Kollross was kind, but told me clearly she didn’t have the answers I was looking for.

“I’m not even sure what data you think would have been relevant,” her email said.

When she put it that way, neither did I.

**It was a mystery** both distant and personal. Being born in ’86, I had learned to be afraid of AIDS before I learned the alphabet. Before I was old enough to have my first crush, I had already been warned—by my parents, by my preschool teachers, by overheard snippets of television and radio—that being queer was guaranteed to result in death, and I have no doubts those subconscious core memories of “gay cancer” are responsible for keeping me in the closet for an extra decade.

It was reading Kollross’s email that made me realize how much my expectations for this story had been affected by another pandemic. I had vague childhood memories of



ANDREW ZIMA / THE COURIER

Students participated in AIDS Awareness week. The weeklong event included presentations remembering those lost to the virus, as well as many displays, booths, and activities providing information on ways to prevent the disease from spreading. A large ribbon was a daily reminder to those passing by the R building.

## Activities focus on awareness

By ANDREW MCDIARMID  
COURIER STAFF WRITER

In the Shatford Library rotunda hangs a memorial of red remembrance ribbons and the pictures of those who died of the plague. In the lounge on the second floor of CC building there are panels of grief remembering those lost to a tragic illness. In the Quad lay tables surrounded by students listening to people who tell that all of this can be prevented in the future.

The presentations around campus this week are focusing student's attention on AIDS: a disease that has killed 361,164 people and has infected another 220,736.

AIDS Awareness weeks sponsored by the Associated Students will continue through today with a variety of events. Two solemn memorials are presented on campus, which include the AIDS Remembrance Memorial in the Shatford Library Rotunda and the National AIDS Quilt in CC Lounge.

The memorial shows pictures of those lost to AIDS suspended in a shower of small ribbons of red. Kellie Ly, a student at PCC, said, "The ribbons are amazing. The people in the pictures seem aware and alive. The

loss of life is such a waste. The pictures have the color picture on one side of the cards, with a dark, sad black and white on the other. It makes the loss haunting."

The Names Project AIDS quilt on display in the lounge is of international renown. The quilt consists of panels 3 feet by 6 feet. Since it began in 1986 the quilt has grown to contain 27,720 individual panels. When displayed as one piece it covers an area the size of 11 football fields without a walkway between the sections; 18 with walkways. The panels range from remembrances of celebrities such as Arthur Ashe, the famous tennis player, and Freddie "Mercury" Bulsara, lead singer for Queen, to personal panels made by those who have lost their loved ones to AIDS. A small section of the existing quilt, as well as information on how to add a panel will be on display until 10 pm today.

A trailer providing free HIV tests will be open through this afternoon and no appointment is necessary. Students can expect to take up to a half hour to complete paperwork and blood work. HIV is the antibody that can lead to the development of AIDS. The tests are completely confidential and results

Please see AIDS, Page 2



AIDS in the early 90s, but now they were filtered through the experience of COVID-19 in the 2020s. Of course there are parallels—people were dying, people were frightened, people were spreading misinformation, and people were blaming Anthony Fauci. But I had assumed things were more comparable then they actually were. In my imagination, communities huddled around their televisions and kept tallies together with vigils.

The reality was people dying unnoticed.

**It is not ignorance** alone that has left AIDS so undocumented. In his book “The Invisible People: How the U.S. Has Slept Through the Global AIDS Pandemic, the Greatest Humanitarian Catastrophe of Our Time,” Greg Behrman explores how Ronald Reagan’s failures were followed by Bill Clinton’s. Reagan’s supporters and advisors openly mocked the disease or called it a punishment from God. When Reagan himself finally deigned to speak on AIDS, the CDC gave him notes for his speech explaining that HIV could only be transmitted through blood or semen; Reagan ignored the notes and instead implied to the American public that HIV could be transmitted through casual contact like shaking

The CDC’s official definition of AIDS was not expanded to include the possibility of female diagnoses until 1991.

hands or public seating. By the time Clinton was president, it was assumed that since the majority of AIDS cases affected the Black population in Africa, most Americans simply would not care.

For all their efforts, the CDC was not immune from prejudice either. When AIDS was becoming prominent among heterosexual Black women, particularly immigrants from Haiti, the CDC considered it impossible. The CDC’s official definition of AIDS was not expanded to include the possibility of female diagnoses until 1991—and so, just like many other population sectors, we will never know how many women lived or died with HIV in the 80s.

**By 1986, pressure to quarantine** gay HIV patients in camps until they stopped showing symptoms—in other words, permanently—was common enough for it to be addressed in the Courier. An opinion piece opposed the quarantine initiatives on October 2, 1986. Special correspondent Paul Grosz didn’t hesitate in condemning the idea and its supporters.

“The question presently at hand,” Grosz wrote, “is whether or not to let the fate of [ . . . ] millions of lives, in and out of the gay community, be decided by a group of repressive, anti-liberal, openly anti-homosexual right wingers. If they are allowed to incarcerate people instead of helping them, who will be their next victim?”

Unfortunately for the Courier’s posterity, even in this ostensibly pro-LGBTQ piece, Grosz repeats the misinformation spread by Reagan.

“Homosexuals and their apologists have consistently argued that the disease can only be transmitted through an exchange of ‘bodily fluids,’ such as blood and semen. They



Fanon Wilkins is a professor of African-American history, and works in the Black Student Success Center. Graduating from high school in 1987, Wilkins experienced the era of AIDS and gay panic with the perspective of a student. Wilkins, who focuses his class on “the centrality of Black life to the creation of this country,” knows that LGBTQ+ communities are marginalized even in 2025.

“Folks who are people of color get marginalized even more,” Wilkins said. “Black people are marginalized already, but being Black and queer? In the 80s?! It was tough!”

the definition of AIDS beyond gay men in 1991, over half of all new AIDS diagnoses were Black. The complex intersectionality of homophobia and racism kept attention on the white gay community in the 80s and 90s, even as the virus hammered on Black immigrant communities. With the focus on AIDS as an LGBTQ+ issue at the expense of Black communities, Black gay men were doubly ignored on both sides.

But if gay Black men were overlooked in the AIDS crisis, Black women were—and still are—even more so.

“It’s about disposability,” says PCC professor Fanon Wilkins. “When you think about white supremacy, the pecking order pyramid, Black women are at the bottom due to racism, patriarchy, homophobia, and male chauvinism.”

**I set out to write** about “the history of the AIDS crisis.” In my head, it was a matter of LGBTQ+ history. I know now that AIDS is not just a historical matter, but an ongoing global pandemic. Even

The original “Silence=Death” poster was designed by a collective of six New York artists: Avram Finklestein, Brian Howard, Oliver Johnston, Charles Kreloff, Chris Lione, and Jorge Socarrás. Deliberately evoking the imagery of the Holocaust and its persecution of LGBTQ+ people, the poster was used by the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT UP) to protest the neglect and complacency of the United States in 1986. It has become one of the most enduring symbols of protest art and civil rights, and the design of these pages is a direct homage to the poster.

Even as a heterosexual man, Wilkins remembers the pressure to adhere to masculine standards. He attended Morehouse College, a historically black college in Atlanta and the alma mater of Martin Luther King. Despite a large (closeted) gay community, Wilkins recalls a pressure on all the students to project a heteronormative, Black masculinity.

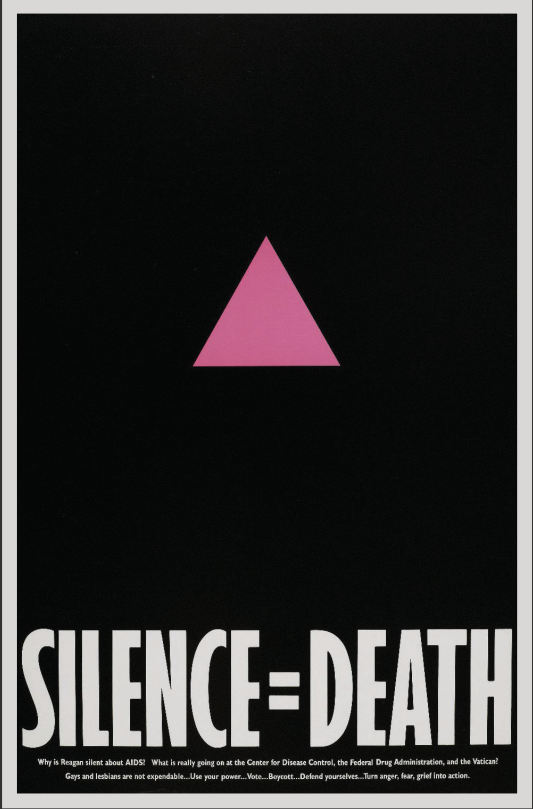
The dysfunction culminated in what Wilkins describes as “Morehouse’s Stonewall moment,” when a gay student was beaten by his roommate. In the aftermath, with increased awareness of the issue, a friend of Wilkins convinced

him that they should get tested for HIV. Even as straight men, it was the responsible thing to do.

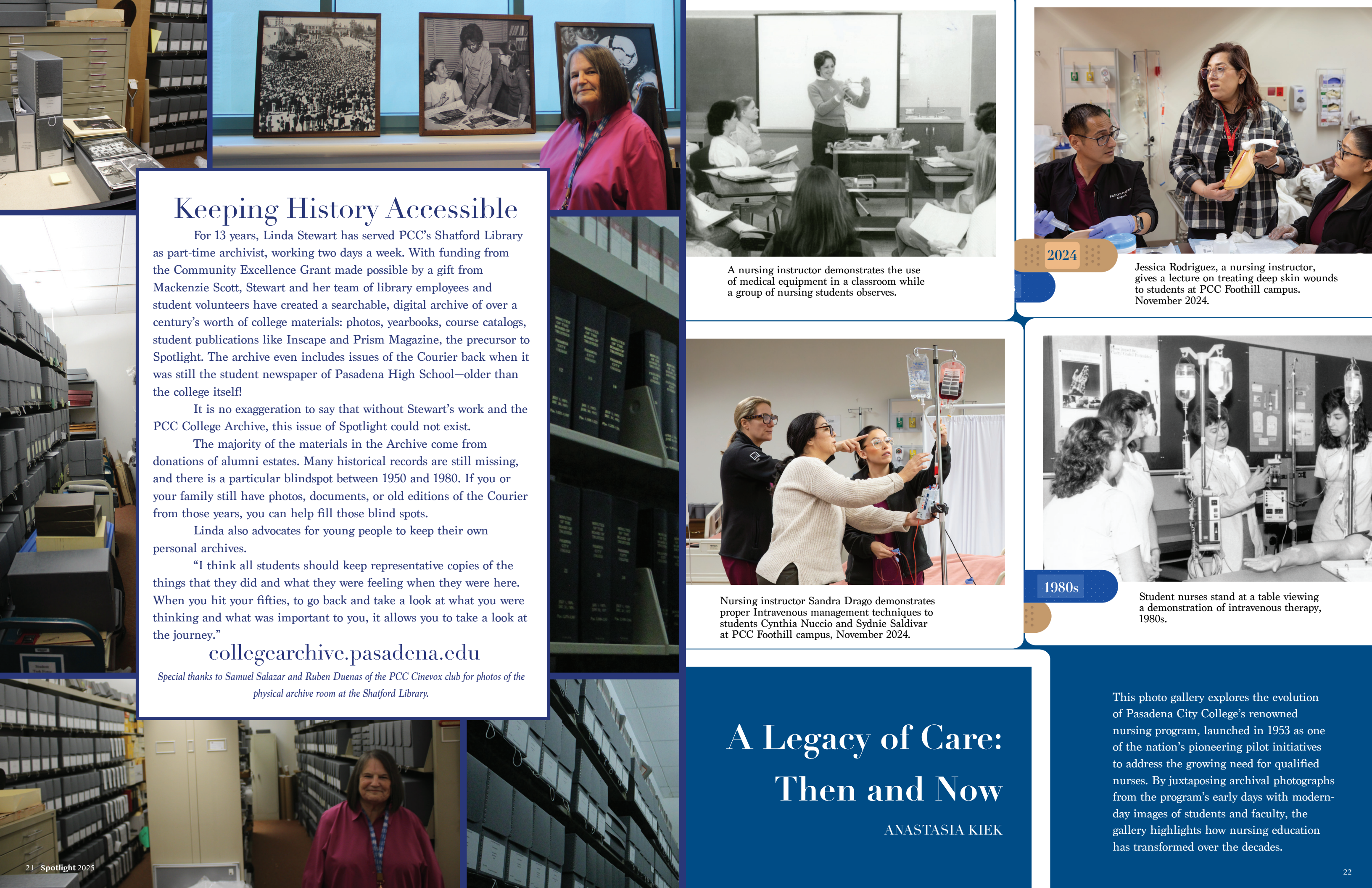
Despite being sexually active, Wilkins had never considered that he might have contracted HIV without knowing it. His eyes are wide as he describes the fear he felt during the ten day waiting period for the test results, which were negative. He has never had HIV, “but those were the longest ten days of my life.”

Opposite page: Fanon Wilkins in his office at the Black Student Success Center, which is decorated with art celebrating African history, labor, and solidarity. Photo / Fern Rojas

Maria was studying to be a marine biologist. Whatever their real names are, however their careers turned out, here in the 2025 issue of Spotlight we remain grateful to them for trusting us with their story. It’s a strong reminder that journalists still have a duty to report on the virus and the people it continues to affect, so that no generation is ever invisible again. ■







# Keeping History Accessible

For 13 years, Linda Stewart has served PCC’s Shatford Library as part-time archivist, working two days a week. With funding from the Community Excellence Grant made possible by a gift from Mackenzie Scott, Stewart and her team of library employees and student volunteers have created a searchable, digital archive of over a century’s worth of college materials: photos, yearbooks, course catalogs, student publications like Inscape and Prism Magazine, the precursor to Spotlight. The archive even includes issues of the Courier back when it was still the student newspaper of Pasadena High School—older than the college itself!

It is no exaggeration to say that without Stewart’s work and the PCC College Archive, this issue of Spotlight could not exist.

The majority of the materials in the Archive come from donations of alumni estates. Many historical records are still missing, and there is a particular blindspot between 1950 and 1980. If you or your family still have photos, documents, or old editions of the Courier from those years, you can help fill those blind spots.

Linda also advocates for young people to keep their own personal archives.

“I think all students should keep representative copies of the things that they did and what they were feeling when they were here. When you hit your fifties, to go back and take a look at what you were thinking and what was important to you, it allows you to take a look at the journey.”

[collegearchive.pasadena.edu](http://collegearchive.pasadena.edu)

*Special thanks to Samuel Salazar and Ruben Duenas of the PCC Cinevox club for photos of the physical archive room at the Shatford Library.*



A nursing instructor demonstrates the use of medical equipment in a classroom while a group of nursing students observes.



2024

Jessica Rodriguez, a nursing instructor, gives a lecture on treating deep skin wounds to students at PCC Foothill campus. November 2024.



Nursing instructor Sandra Drago demonstrates proper Intravenous management techniques to students Cynthia Nuccio and Sydnie Saldivar at PCC Foothill campus, November 2024.



1980s

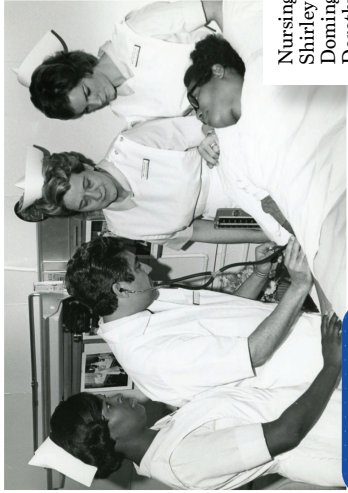
Student nurses stand at a table viewing a demonstration of intravenous therapy, 1980s.

# A Legacy of Care: Then and Now

ANASTASIA KIEK

This photo gallery explores the evolution of Pasadena City College’s renowned nursing program, launched in 1953 as one of the nation’s pioneering pilot initiatives to address the growing need for qualified nurses. By juxtaposing archival photographs from the program’s early days with modern-day images of students and faculty, the gallery highlights how nursing education has transformed over the decades.





Nursing students Shirley Williams, Dominga Galvin, Dorothy Caruso, Janet McCosh, Alicia Gray get vitals from a patient.

1973



Nursing students Ani Muradyan, Chelsea Goldsmith, and Di Gao practice lifesaving techniques at PCC Foothill campus.

2024



Filling a syringe, photographer unknown.

1980s



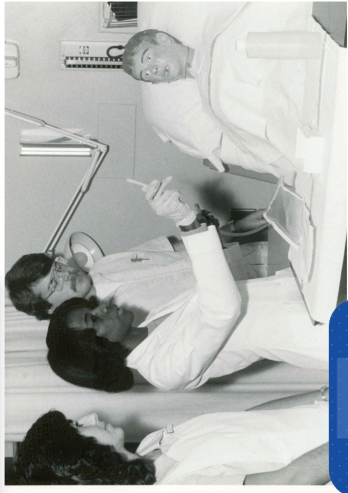
2024



1960s

Nursing students Tatiana Marroquin and Cindy Mirele Sifuentes practice wound care by applying dressings at PCC Foothill campus.

Instructor demonstrates how to use suction to nursing students.



1980s



2024

Nursing students change bandages, photographer unknown.

Paula Vento, RN Professor, administers an exam to PCC nursing student Adainne Lababit.



2024

Nursing students Edgar Leon and Natalia Tokareva practice wound care using a syringe.



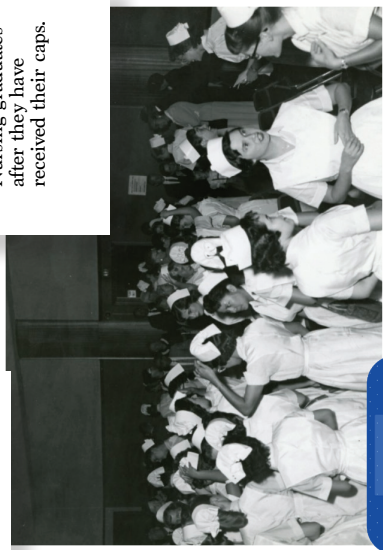
1970s

Group photo of nursing students, photographer unknown.



2024

Nursing students Ashley Derrico, Andres Huerta, Alessandra Almager, and Lauren Simsat at PCC Foothill campus, November 2024.



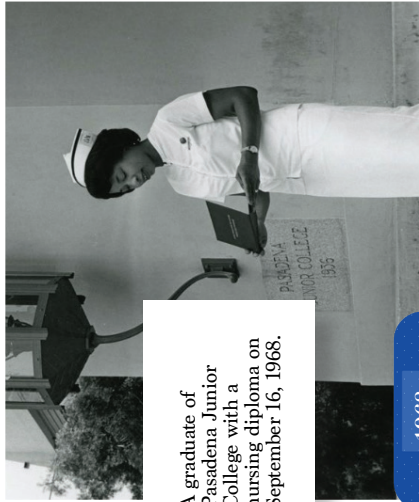
1950s

Nursing graduates after they have received their caps.



2024

Nursing student Maria Betancourt walks through the hallway at PCC Foothill campus.



1968

A graduate of Pasadena Junior College with a nursing diploma on September 16, 1968.



1950s

Capping ceremony for graduation. Contemporary ceremonies have replaced the cap with a pin.



2024

Pinning ceremony in Westerbeck Hall on December 12, 2024, PCC Colorado campus. PCC instructor Kristen Schulz pins a nursing pin on the shirt of graduate Natalie Portillo.



2024

Pinning ceremony in Westerbeck Hall on December 12, 2024, PCC Colorado campus. Graduates hold candles at the end of the graduation ceremony.

A heartfelt thank you to Dunnie T. Cho, Sandra Drago, Jessica R. Rodriguez, Jeong K. O, Micah L. Young, Jenny Chuang, Cody Zhou, Eizen Yap, Fern Rojas, Tim Berger, Dmitry Sidorenko.

A heartfelt thank you to all other participants — students, faculty, and staff — who generously contributed their time to bring this project to life. All archival pictures were borrowed from collegearchive.pasadena.edu.



# OPEN FOR BUSINESS: *How the sex revolution affected PCC*

by Mikaela Perez

In 1971 *Courier* staff writer W.D. Naeve flashed his measly little *Courier* badge at a Venus Adult Theater manager, trying to watch an adult movie. Naeve was on a mission to watch pornography for an article about what happens at porn theaters. Kicked out of Venus, he sought out his luck at Cinema 1200 on Walnut Street where he was warmly welcomed by an employee. Naeve was able to discover two things that day: a source for his article and his first adult movie.

Naeve wasn't the only PCC student seeking answers to the explosion of all things sex. Millions of Americans were trying to find answers to cope with the sudden change of culture, while some were embracing the change and advocating for more.

In the 1960s-1970s America experienced an intense sexual revolution, pulling sexual issues out of the shadows and into the spotlight. The revolution was notorious for

getting rid of the notion that only men enjoy sex. Women began to speak freely about their enjoyment on sex, going hand in hand with the women's liberation movement.

The sexual revolution sparked different forms of sexual expression as well as sexual liberation. And if it wasn't for the FDA approving a small little pill in the 60s, then who knows how much longer sex would've stayed in the shadows? Believe it not, some college students still don't know how sperm impregnates a woman even in 2025.

Naeve wasn't the only *Courier* writer to touch on sex, either. In navigating the changing culture, the *Courier's* Opinion pages have been filled with discussions of birth control (including population control), abortion, and legalizing pornography.

Oral contraceptives—a.k.a. “the pill”—first hit the market with FDA approval in 1957 to regulate periods. The first experimental trials of the pill took place in Puerto Rico; there were no laws against birth control there, and the women chosen were not literate. The participants had to meet four requirements: they had to be in good health, under forty years old, have had

at least two children to prove fertility, and lastly had to agree to have a child if they became pregnant.

While the pill was ostensibly for regulating periods, women happily used its contraceptive “side effects,” which were printed on the side of the box as a warning. In 1959, 500,000 women were regular users of birth control. Fast forward to today, and that number is over 100 million women.

The pill did its job as a contraceptive, but received backlash for a number of reasons. Aside from health concerns and the severe side effects, there were moral concerns. Not only did the pill allow women to express their sexuality more openly, but the pill raised questions of whether or not it was going against God's will. Women were now officially opened for business and could fully be in control of who, when, and where they wanted to have sex. The revolution had begun.

The *Courier* seemed to have different opinions around the issues of abortion, birth control, and pornography. When it came to birth control, writers opined about the need for birth control due to an overpopulation crisis. One article published in 1965 dives into the need for

birth control in order to stop a “population explosion” from happening. In a way, it was ahead of its time; by 1970, mass hysteria broke out over the idea that the earth would be so overpopulated that we would roam the earth as starving humans.

When it comes to abortion, a controversial topic even today, the *Courier* published a couple of opinions. These are mainly found in letters to the editor, and most of these arguments are said verbatim today. Legalize abortion to eliminate the amount of illegal and dangerous abortions. Don't legalize abortion because it's murder.

Although the sex revolution made way for sex to be out in the public, some things were still done in private... mostly. You could take your birth control in the privacy of your bedroom. But some things were just done in public and were usually in your face. Like watching porn.

Almost any metropolitan area in the 1970s was filled with an abundance of adult movie theaters. Also known nudie houses, these were common alongside adult gift shops. Other than Naeve's charming article about his experience inside an adult movie theater, *Courier* writers over the years had

views. On April 23, 1976, managing editor Ted Baxter wrote about the need to remove porn stores around Pasadena. Baxter claims that Pasadena increasingly became infested with porn, tainting the beautiful “city of roses.” Alongside this argument, Baxter feared that Pasadena's blindness to the porn corruption could ultimately be its destruction.

“Pasadena can't be that much in need of new business,” Baxter wrote. “Catering to baser instincts fosters all kinds of problems. Such behavior supposedly contributed to Rome's downfall. There is no reason for history to repeat itself here.”

One month later, staff writer Nancy Wahl argued against Baxter's article, claiming that removing such entertainment is a total violation of a person's first amendment rights. Wahl also wrote that porn, as an issue of morality, didn't violate any laws and is just an inconvenience to some.

“Unless new studies come out which contradict reports,” Wahl wrote, “we should be content.”

Boy, was she right. Today, studies show how harmful porn is to the brain and affects brain

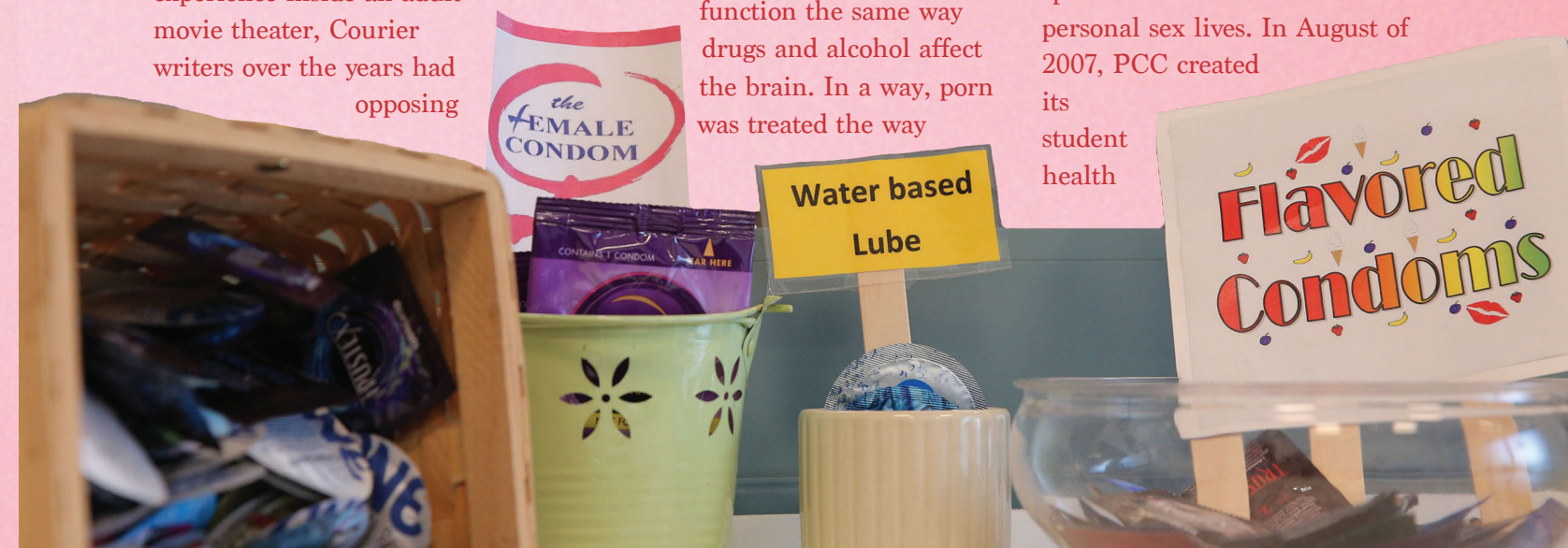
function the same way drugs and alcohol affect the brain. In a way, porn was treated the way

smoking cigarettes was *untreated*. The subjective morality issue of pornography was (and still) is on the table for discussion.

Moving forward into the new millennium, the *Courier* made efforts to make sex a recurring topic to write about. Maybe it was because “Sex and the City” was a huge hit, or maybe it was just the political climate at the time. Besides the usual opinions on the legalization of gay marriage, we offered something a little more light hearted: Sexpert.

Sexpert was the *Courier's* short-lived sex column that ran from April-October 2005, replacing a relationship advice column called “Ask Miss Kitty.” Sexpert seemed to have been very inspired by the magazine and blogging culture at the time, like a pseudo-Carrie Bradshaw. Sexpert wrote about topics such as pubic hair, student and teacher sex scandals, and adult toys. Frankly, some of the stuff makes me a little queasy to write, and I'm very surprised that Sexpert was able to openly talk about their discoveries (talk about personal bias).

Besides some of the more relaxed conversations about sex, PCC was trying to create a healthy space for students and their personal sex lives. In August of 2007, PCC created its student health





care system. The services included STD and HIV testing, pregnancy tests, and women's health. Most of the services were free alongside a visit to the physician or nurse.

Today, the health center has expanded their sex resources but are still very limited. Mindy Throop, a nurse practitioner on campus, talked to me about the current sex resources offered at PCC.

"I don't know when we started offering birth control...the state requires that we offer [it]," says Mindy. "The options we provide here are oral birth control, that's what we keep on campus. We can prescribe to pick up here or at a pharmacy."

The center only carries one brand of oral birth control, as well as condoms. Birth control will cost about \$10 a month, or they can write you a prescription and send it to your insurance. The health center can also provide the "morning after" pill for the low cost of \$8-\$33, but it'll take an appointment to get your hands on one of those.

In April of 2008, the Courier's "Flipside" section was themed entirely around sex. Staff writer Brittany Wong interviewed multiple students to figure out their stance and "position" on sex. Students had an array of opinions on what sex meant to them or how it was handled in society.

"[W]e tend to get uncomfortable about it," said professor Jennifer Noble, who taught a human sexuality class at the time. Noble refers to our Protestant roots in America and how people get uncomfortable

talking about sex if it isn't for or about procreation. Other opinions mostly talked about the promiscuity culture and how people don't take sex seriously anymore.

I decided to also ask students what they think about the sexual health services offered here at PCC. To my surprise, most of them wanted to remain anonymous. While sex is a sensitive topic, Wong's story in 2008 was much more personal, and those students were willing to put their full names on the record. While I was able to get

"I don't even know my own anatomy"

names from some students, in at least some ways students are still searching how to discuss these topics today.

"I think they do a pretty good job, like they offer a lot of stuff... I was surprised," a student giggled.

"I think there's always room for improvement... such as access to abortion care and aftercare would be really important," said another anonymous student.

"Personally I've not seen any of those [services] advertised," said Isabella Depalma.

"It's my first year here. When I was at Jam, they showed us all of the plan Bs and condoms they

give. I've never went in for that stuff," said Harry Hairapetian.

One student in particular, who also wishes to remain anonymous, went into depth about their knowledge and education about sex. Many of Noble's observations held true about what they had to say.

"I think just the way it's approached, the way it's handled between people can be a lot better," this student said. "I'm not careless and [I'm] mindful of who I am with."

The student expanded on the idea that sex is more than a physical act, feeling it is reduced to a mere physical act today. When it comes to sex education, they also feel as if there isn't a one size fits all approach.

"[That's] a rather careless way to go about it," they said. And just like Noble mentioned, the student draws back to the country's religious roots and

how sex is demonized in our culture which still affects the conversations around it today.

"It's not something people talk about everyday...there's some sort of embarrassment of talking about it and bringing it up. Maybe it doesn't get the spotlight it deserves," said the student.

Aside from their personal qualms about sex and the education they've received. I asked about the knowledge they have about sex.

"I don't know anatomy," they said. "I don't even know my own anatomy." ■

# The 210 freeway is a monolith of systemic racism in Pasadena

Story by Monet Ayala

Design by Mikaela Perez

Although it may be difficult to imagine now, Pasadena was once a primarily rail town before the completion of the Arroyo Seco Parkway in 1940. Since then, freeways such as the 210 have been making transportation smoother and simpler. The 210 in particular was proposed with two different routes in mind. Ultimately, the route selected for the Foothill freeway went straight through Pasadena's thriving Black neighborhoods. The selected route disproportionately affected low-income and marginalized communities in Pasadena, effectively contributing to systemic racism, segregation, and the polarization of these communities.

During World War II, California experienced a population increase of 2.5 million or 30% because of the amount of defense industry jobs available there. When Californians had to accommodate their large population, transportation became a major point of concern as automobiles

were gradually becoming a more common method of transportation and local roads could not accommodate the amount of cars.

Because of the success of the Arroyo Seco Parkway in addressing previous traffic congestion concerns in the 1930s, many Californians believed that a more expansive freeway system could solve California's transportation problems.

This, as well as the abundance of federal funding available for the purpose of building freeways, resulted in a highway construction boom in Southern California, and the building and planning of the 210 freeway began.

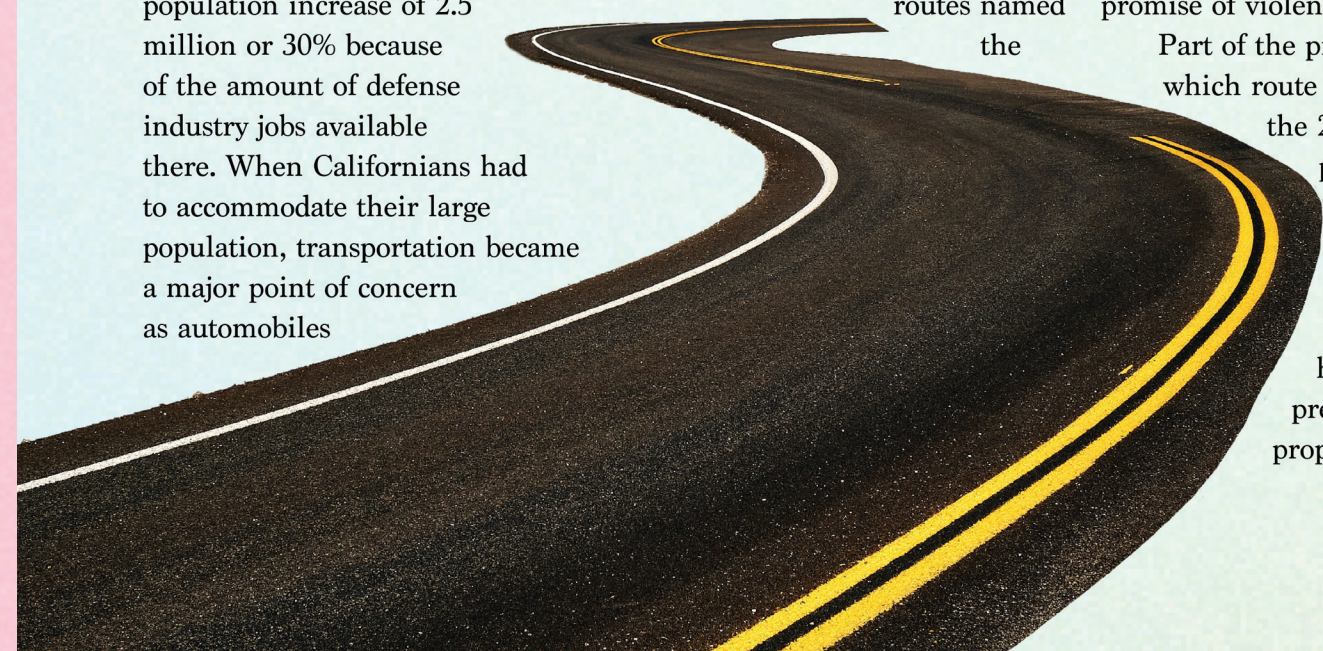
The planning of the 210 freeway involved two proposed routes named the

Blue route and the Green route. The Blue route would have run along the eastern edge of the Arroyo Seco while the Green route ran through Northwest Pasadena.

The Northwest side was home to primarily Black, Mexican American, and Japanese American residents at this time due to discriminatory housing policies and redlining. In fact, by 1960 80% of residents in Northwest Pasadena were people of color compared to 19% in LA County and 20% in the City of Pasadena overall.

By contrast, South Pasadena was a "sundown town," where people of color could work, but were not allowed to reside or be present after sundown without the promise of violence.

Part of the process to decide which route to select for the 210 was to hold public freeway routing meetings for Pasadena residents. State highway officials presented the proposed







The 210 as seen from above. December 2024. Drone photo / Tim Berger

Foothill freeway routes, and attendees were able to express concerns about their homes being destroyed, the impact on their property values and their overall quality of life, as well as the possible disruption of local business.

However, the audiences of these meetings were not demographically representative of the areas in which the demolition to build the 210 freeway would occur. In fact, photographs of the crowd at one of these meetings showed an entirely white audience, showing that freeway engineers were not taking into account the concerns of Pasadena residents who would primarily be affected by the building of the 210 freeway.

Ultimately, the Green route was selected as it aligned with the Pasadena Planning Commission's 1962 General Plan, which focused on urban renewal specifically by changing zoning in the Fair Oaks neighborhood. Additionally, several important individuals such as State Assemblyman George Danielson advocated for the Green route, according to a Pasadena Star News article from May 7, 1964.

"There is no logical choice except to follow the Green route," Danielson was quoted, arguing that it would have the greatest benefit for traffic efficiency, users, and "communities concerned."

A study conducted by professors from UCLA and UC Davis found that the selected Green route displaced 2,681 people and destroyed 923 housing

units. Additionally, the study found that the chosen Green route had a population of 1,702 with 76% households of color while the Blue route had a population of 221 with 54% households of color.

Susie Ling, a professor of history at Pasadena City College, views the decision as one of convenience rather than malice.

"I don't think it was intentional," Ling said. "I don't think anyone sat down and went, 'How can we get the marginalized people?' But it was just the path of least resistance, in the sense that the African Americans, the Latinos and the Asian Americans, were the poor people. And so, if you were going to try and buy their houses or pave a path through their homes, their complaints weren't going to be as loud as, for example, people in South Pasadena."

Regardless of whether or not the freeway was intended to devastate these communities, the ultimately selected Green route was far more destructive to residents of color than the Blue route would have been.

"It's differential access to power along racial and class lines," said Regan Patterson, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at UCLA in an interview with Afro LA News. "Where freeways were routed disproportionately impacted poor communities of color, particularly Black and Latino communities."

Had the residents of these Northwest

—Black residents in particular—had more political voice at the time, they may have been able to avoid significant freeway burdens in a similar manner to the rich white neighborhoods.

Although property owners were reimbursed according to fair market values, the property values in the area were very low due to historical redlining in the area. It was also incredibly difficult for displaced residents of color to find housing in other areas of Pasadena. The amount of money they received was in no way proportionate to the damage being done to their lives.

The freeway also contributed greatly to social segregation. The 210 created a visible divide between Northwest Pasadena and the rest of the city, cutting this area off from the commercial West side it was once connected to. It also created a physical barrier within the neighborhood itself.

"It cut communities so that if you wanted to visit your neighbor, you know, across the street, now you have to go around to visit your neighbor" said Ling, who lives in Monrovia. "That freeway, although I use it, you know, it cuts our community."

Homes were not the only things destroyed by the freeway. The selected Green route uprooted multiple religious institutions, schools, community centers, and Black-owned businesses. Homes that were near the freeway were noticeably lower in value in comparison to the rest of Pasadena, and lagged behind other homes in terms of increasing value over time.

Additionally, the location of the freeway exacerbated health issues in the area. It left residents of the Fair Oaks area to be exposed to an incredibly high volume of pollution at a time where there were far less regulations on cars to prevent pollution. In fact, according to the California EPA Map, the area of Northwest Pasadena that the 210 freeway passes through has a pollution vulnerability in the 70th to 80th percentiles.

"I mean, before the 1980s we were using leaded gas, and that's dangerous stuff," said Ling. "So, you have these small homes next to a freeway with trucks and leaded gas. And I just shudder at the thought of children playing in the yard, or my puppy dog, you know, eating junk off the street. It's just devastating."

Residents of Northwest Pasadena also had to deal with noise pollution as a result of the freeway. Although the 210 is underground for much of its route throughout central Pasadena, it is elevated in Northwest Pasadena, leading to more significant noise pollution than in other areas.

The lack of political voice given to the Black residents of Pasadena becomes even more glaringly obvious when examined alongside a recent example

**"That freeway, although I use it, you know, it cuts our community."**

**PCC history professor Susie Ling**

of South Pasadena residents successfully blocking an extension of the 710 being built in their community. Perhaps if just as much weight had been given to the protests of Northwest Pasadena residents of color, freeway planners could have found an alternative to the Green route.

Intentional or not, the routing of the 210 freeway has had a devastating effect on the Black population of Pasadena. The alternate route would have been much less damaging to the community, but unfortunately the Foothill freeway was built during a time when the voices of Black Americans were not taken into account when making major decisions such as these. As a result, the community in Northwest Pasadena has suffered greatly from separation from the rest of the city, the displacement of thousands of residents, the destruction of small businesses, religious and community centers, and pollution. ■



# SPECIAL EDITION

P A S A D E N A C I T Y C O L L E G E

## COURIER

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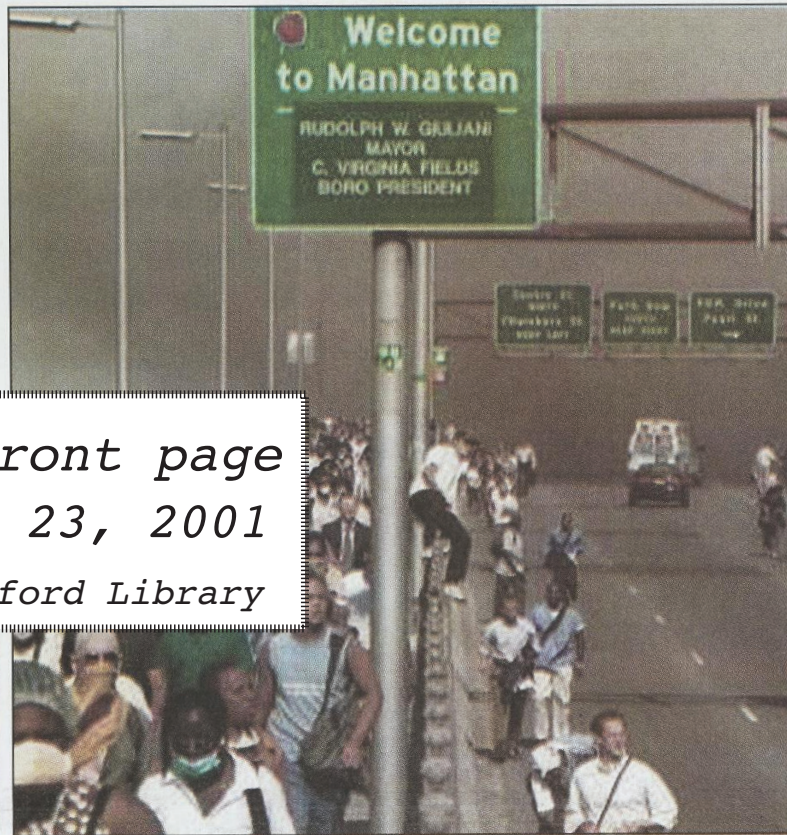
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SEPTEMBER 13, 2001



*Courier front page  
September 23, 2001  
Archive/Shatford Library*



Courtesy of Associated Press

## Campus Reacts

**Terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C. shock the nation and cause widespread chaos. As the death toll climbs, devastated Americans arieve those who died and expressed an outpouring of unfamiliar emotions .**

Students and faculty voiced their concerns about Tuesday's tragedy.

"I feel that what happened is the start of a new revolution. This is the end of the world. Not their world, but our world. Be expecting more: this is just the begin-

"It was so unexpected. The first thing I thought when I saw what happened was that Bush will do anything in his power to find out who did this and why, and there

"America is thought of as almighty. They chose targets that are known worldwide. It was meant as a statement that America isn't as invincible as we think. We do not



*"A lot is going to happen in the next few weeks"*

by Riley Brady

**September 11 gripped the nation** and defined the 21st century to come. It was the largest singular terrorist attack on American soil, with nearly 3,000 lives lost, and the years following the coordinated attacks saw massive change in American foreign diplomacy and national security. Additionally, the subsequent War on Terror and the increased United States military involvement into the middle east saw many students flung into the ensuing conflict.

Like many schools across the country, the students of Pasadena City College were grappling with the ensuing horrors despite being thousands of miles away. On the 13th of September, just three days after the attacks occurred, the Courier published a series of anecdotes in which students voiced their concerns on the tragedy; unsurprisingly, many students feared how these attacks will affect America's political and social climate in the time to come.

"I feel like a lot is going to happen within the next few weeks. History is unfolding in front of us, and it doesn't look good. All I can say is that we need to truly pray for all the innocent lives lost," said 18-year-old marketing major George Hakopian.

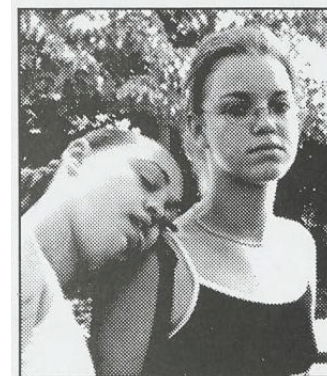
The campus was quick to swing into action. The school's broadcast radio, KPCC.FM, hosted

a crisis hotline, while additional campus police were called in to deal with any potential unrest or security threats. The Associated Students of PCC held a meeting just hours after the catastrophe in which they organized a food pantry, blood donation, and mental health services for those directly or indirectly affected by the attacks.

The tragedy even affected members of the Courier itself;

Around 1:30p.m., after hours of following the story, my cell phone rang. It was Crystal.

"Oh my God, Crystal!" I cried. "Are you okay? Where are you?"



Crystal, right, and her roommate at the Statue of Liberty in NYC last month.

reporter Bethany Johnson published a piece in which she describes the fears of trying to reach her best friend, Crystal, who lived just 15 minutes away from the trade center.

Thanks to Crystal, the Courier was able to reach someone who

was viewing the attacks and their aftermath just hours after it had happened.

Additionally, the increase in xenophobia which overtook the nation following the attacks did not go unnoticed by the students. In a piece published on September 20th, titled "Foreign Students Fearful of Becoming Targets of Hate," the Courier looked at student fears surrounding anti-Arab sentiment. The story called attention to a series of anti-Arab posters that were placed around campus by unidentified individuals before being removed by campus security. The racist slogans on the poster were mentioned, but not repeated.

Iranian student Raile, whose last name was not provided, was interviewed and asked about her thoughts on this slew of xenophobia on campus and throughout the country.

"There are a lot of countries in the Middle East; mine is just one of them. Even if the terrorist is from Iran, why should I have to be afraid? I am a student. I am not guilty or responsible for all the criminals in any country," she answered.

It appears that even seemingly progressive institutions

Opposite: Front page of the PCC Courier's special edition following the attacks. The edition was four pages, all devoted to various elements of campus reaction. Above: A clip from Bethany Johnson's story on page 2. Archive / Shatford Library.



were not immune to the bigotry that plagued our country in the weeks to even years following the 9/11 attacks.

The same day the courier published their story on the Islamophobia gripping the campus, former president George W. Bush declared a nationwide “War on Terror.” In an attempt to quell the fear of more domestic terrorism at home and abroad, the United States conducted a series of military operations in the Middle East, mainly in Iraq and Afghanistan. Just like the tragedy that occurred on September 11th, many PCC students were directly affected by the conflicts that ensued following that tragic day.

Anti-war protests became almost commonplace within many college campuses around the country. On March 22, 2003, a mass protest occurred just outside the C building, in which dozens of PCC students pretended to lay dead on the ground.

Campus police were later charged with misconduct in a pending lawsuit due to the non-violent nature of the protest and their use of what was described as “excessive force.” PCC’s then-chief of police, Peter Michael, wished not to comment when reached out to by the Courier staff. However, he did go on the record to state:

“An internal study was conducted that laid out better ways for officers to handle these situations. One of the recommendations called for better training of our officers, which we complied with.” These initial anti-war protests played a key role in the policies regarding handling protestors on campus.

In 2007, just four years after the campus grappled with anti-war protests, the Courier

“We all want this war to end.”

Saba Karin-Arce, Iraqi-born protester



covered ongoing protests happening in Hollywood.

“This world is going to hell,” stated one counter-protester. “Wake up! Al-Qaeda loves you!”

Iraqi-born protester Saba Karin-Arce was at the rally, protesting for the thousands of Iraqi lives lost. She summarized the general sentiment of the protest best: “We all want this war to end.”

Months later, on Nov. 1, 2007, PCC mourned the loss of 21-year-old student Rogelio Ramirez. Ramirez was among the 4,492 American soldiers who lost their lives in Iraq. PCC students organized a protest against an army recruitment center just across the street from the campus, one of several which occurred throughout L.A. County. Protesters, many of whom were former veterans and students, blocked the entrance to the recruitment center holding signs that boldly stated, “Crime Scene.”

From students fearing for the safety of themselves or their loved ones, to violence erupting on campus, the September 11th attacks played a pivotal role in defining our campus politics.

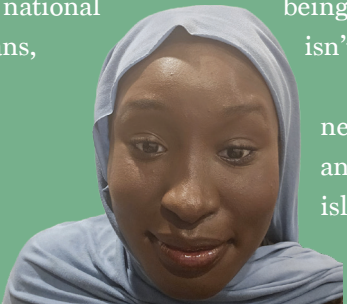
“I think that 9/11 itself may not be as difficult to discuss as it used to be, but I think that it has created negative stereotypes around certain racial groups, and those assumptions and prejudices still exist today,” said Kaylee Pusateri, a current PCC student. “I think our campus should be a safe place to discuss these things, and I think that PCC does try to be very inclusive, but at the end of the day it depends on the students and who’s involved in these discussions.” ■

My parents immigrated to the United States in 2001. When I tell people that, they often look at the hijab on my head and my dark skin with the word “How?” written on their faces. Well, my parents immigrated right before 9/11 and the subsequent prioritization of national security through discriminatory means, scrutinizing Muslims (or suspected Muslims) entering the nation. My parents came to the U.S. from their native Sénégal for the reason many immigrants do; their country

was destroyed by Western imperialism, so they sought a better life elsewhere.

When they came here, they were in their early 30s, seated in their adulthood but still scared of the unknown. I don’t blame them; being Black and Muslim in America still isn’t easy.

They had no family here. They needed to find a Muslim community, and navigate the burgeoning islamophobia and racism that 9/11 had unleashed. When I think of



## After 9/11, my parent’s America wasn’t my own

by Zaynab Tall

My father stands in a field, photographed by a Muslim friend in the U.S. / Tall Family Album

their experience, I remember lines from the name poem I wrote in my creative writing class:

*And at first, I acquiesce  
Like my mother with her brodé and  
her bazain  
Or my father with his ‘terrorist’  
beard.*

The poem references how many mispronounce my name, but instead of correcting them, I assimilate—just like my parents. My father was warned by another Muslim that his beard, an Islamic sunnah (practice of our beloved Prophet), would cause him to be labeled a terrorist, so he shaved it. My mother was told her African clothes would make her target, so she swapped out colorful, intricate dresses for bland sweaters and slacks. They melted. I understood; it was about survival. My dad was an educated mathematician, but finding a job would be extremely hard as a Black man, let alone a Black Muslim man. In the Ummah

(Muslim community), there’s a point of contention as to whether Muslim men really face the prejudice Muslimahs do. Those wearing hijab bear the weight of being seen as Muslim, while Muslim men do not. Just last year, as Israel’s genocide on



My mother (farthest left) and her older sister during an outing with friends. / Tall Family Album

Palestine came to the forefront, my father had a conversation with me. At the time, I’d started wearing the niqab: a Islamic head covering that covers the face as well. As he drove me from school, he broke the silence. “Why are you wearing that?,” he asked.

I was confused; I was following our deen (faith). Was this the same man

who smiled when I came downstairs for my first day of 8th grade wearing the hijab?

“For the sake of Allah (God),” I said carefully.

My dad then tells me Islam is the middle path and shouldn’t be practised with extremism, especially since wearing niqab is disputed by some Islamic scholars. He says that Allah expects us to follow what is clear.

“You should know what you’re getting into, especially in a time like this, where people are attacking others,” he said.

His accent slips out. They say that happens when people are emotional or passionate, he cared. My dad asks another question: if anyone said anything about the niqab.

“No one said anything,” I replied.

He was surprised. Maybe they thought it instead of saying it; that I was weird or extreme. I didn’t know, but the thought had entered my mind. When I returned home that day, my older sister came into my room to talk to me.



“Mommy and Daddy are worried about you wearing the niqab,” she said. “They wanted me to convince you to stop.”

It’s funny, I only wore a niqab because I was tired of wearing a mask. It made my face feel hot, made it hard to breathe, and was a nuisance. But, I didn’t like people seeing my face, so a niqab seemed perfect: it covered my



Selfie wearing a niqab / Zaynab Tall

head and my face. I explained my reasons and told her I’d take it off, it wasn’t a big deal. When I came down the next day to go to school, I was wearing my hijab. My parents greeted me with our usual Salams and hugs that I returned. I wasn’t angry with them; I understood their fears.

Plus, I knew many Muslim girls had it different. My parents encouraged our religiosity without force, while some parents did force their kids or never wanted them to wear the hijab at all, calling it extreme. Others saw any indication of religiosity as a threat; wearing abaya, praying daily, reading the Qur’an. They came from a place of fear, I’d like to think. They still remembered the terrorists of their past; those who made their lives or the lives of their communities hard.

As a Muslimah, I’d always had pride in my religion. It was one of the main reasons I loved my parents and my family; they embodied the kindness, patience, generosity, forgiveness and morality our religion called for. I routinely attended Sunday school in my youth to learn about my religion, including its history, how to pray, and memorizing surahs alongside Allah’s 99 names. I

fondly remember my Islamic teachers. They were always kind, giving my sisters and I treats or letting us take snacks from the masjid’s fridge. That kind of kindness is seldom portrayed in the media; Muslims are relegated to extremists with an agenda.

That ignorance also manifested in bullying, as even in the early 2010s kids would still make 9/11 jokes.

At the time, I didn’t “look” Muslim; I was still too young to wear hijab and some people think Black and Muslim

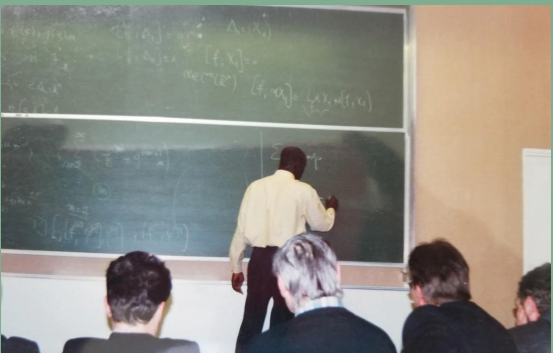
are antonyms. So, I never faced any discrimination as a child, not even when I started wearing a headscarf in 8th grade. I remember coming back from Sénégal that summer with this grand image in my mind that I’d be shot down in some fashion, told “You can’t wear that.” I walked into school with my head held high, expecting indignation. I’d heard stories,



My mom in her early 30s, sitting for a portrait. / Tall Family Album

seen the news. I was grateful my community was accepting, and I’ve found throughout the years most were curious about my religion.

Walking down the halls at PCC, I’ve had many see me wearing my abaya, in vibrant colors and patterns, complementing them and calling me beautiful. I wish my mother experienced the



My dad writes equations in front of math faculty in the early 2000s. / Tall Family Album

same. I like to think I do it for the both of us now.

I’m currently Vice President of the Muslim Student Association and I believe PCC is an inclusive, mostly unprejudiced community, especially since a diverse group of staff and students supported Palestine through on-campus rallies.

The MSA’s board consists of 2 non-Muslim members who are very respectful and curious about Islam. As Muslims, our hope is that non-Muslims will approach us and our religion in the same way: with an open mind and a kind heart. We don’t expect you to live our way of life or believe in what we believe in, just to treat us like human beings. I leave you with a Qur’anic quote.

“We have made you into peoples and tribes that you may get to know one another” (Surah Al-Hujurat 13).

PCC’s MSA typically meets every Tuesday in C-257. So get to know us from us; don’t rely on others to tell our stories or our truths. ■

My mom in Islamic attire, passing papers to her students. / Tall Family Album



# The Courier Presents... YESTERDENA

## History Hiding in Plain Sight

Listen to *Yesterdena*, a new podcast from the Courier uncovering the bold ideas, forgotten experiments, and people who shaped Pasadena’s history — all pulled from original documents and local archives.





# The Sun Hasn't Set on Student Activism

by Joseph Lee



**“Attention, attention!”** echoed the megaphoned voice of an LAPD officer.

The shrill wail of sirens pierced the crisp evening air as crimson lights flashed in rhythmic pulses, casting an ominous glow on the army of protesters who stood defiantly on the Sunset strip.

“The curfew law is now in effect! Anyone under the age of 18 years old remaining in the area will be arrested!” the officer threatened from a rolling police car, as herds of “Hollywood’s flower children” stood steadfast in front of the purple-and-gold-painted Pandora’s Box, a late-night hangout and underage drinking spot on the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Crescent Heights Boulevard.

“It is now past 10 p.m.! The curfew law is now in effect! Anyone under the age of 18 years old remaining in the area will be arrested!”

The protesting crowd consisted of mostly 15 to 20 year olds, demeaningly referred to as “hippies.” They raised their signs in refusal, waving them towards the sky and in the faces of officers clad in white helmets and black uniforms.

Youth activists protest violence from the Hollywood “police state,” complete with a mocking effigy of Adolf Hitler. Originally appeared in Los Angeles Free Press, a free left-wing punk newspaper, Nov. 18 1966. Photo / William Warren

Further down the strip, the youth gathered at the nearby Fifth Estate Coffee House, boldly painting the phrase “END POLICE BRUTALITY” in large black capital letters across the side of the building, as protests continued to unfold in their immediate vicinity.

During the 1960’s, the city of Los Angeles became a focal point for the counterculture movement, fueled by rising opposition for the Vietnam war and a newfound willingness to challenge established authority.

At the heart of this cultural shift was the vibrant music scene that thrived along a single 1.7 mile stretch of Sunset Blvd, where iconic bands like The Doors, Frank Zappa’s Mothers of Invention, and Buffalo Springfield shaped their legends. Just two miles away, in the neighborhood of Laurel Canyon, many of the decade’s most influential folk and rock musicians found their home and inspiration, including the aforementioned Frank Zappa, Jim Morrison of The

Doors, Joni Mitchell, and Carole King.

At the foot of the Sunset Strip, Pandora’s Box emerged as a popular nightclub and coffeehouse. In 2007, Cecilia Rasmussen of the Los Angeles Times described its nightly crowd as “mostly clean-cut teenagers and twenty somethings wearing pullover sweaters and miniskirts.” But in the 60’s, older locals deemed the venue a haven for the “hippies” and the “long-haired”.

No matter what they were, clean-cut or long-haired, wherever they seemed to congregate on the bustling Hollywood streets, traffic jams and drug-fueled revelry would be sure to follow.

Of course, circumstances such as these could not be sustained for long. Frustrated by the nightly chaos, local residents and business owners demanded that laws be put in place as a means of curbing the growing crowds.

In response, the authorities began targeting clubs on the Strip, with police efforts to shut down or sabotage venues like Pandora’s Box and the iconic Whisky a Go Go.

Meanwhile, city officials enacted strict 10 p.m. curfew and anti-loitering laws for those under 18 years old, coupled with an intensified police presence on the strip.

Over the forthcoming weeks, as Pandora’s Box faced closure, two teenagers posted fliers calling for a protest in front of the ill-fated nightclub.

“PROTEST POLICE MISTREATMENT OF YOUTH ON SUNSET BLVD,” the flier read in block capitals. “NO MORE Shackling of 14 & 15 yr. olds; Arbitrary arrests of youths; Disrespect and abuse of youths by police.”

Eventually, the fliers piqued the interest of local rock and roll radio stations, which also began spreading word of a rally in front of Pandora’s Box, urging people to “tread carefully.”

On the chilly Saturday evening of Nov. 12, 1966, somewhere between 900 to 3,000 youth protesters gathered in front of Pandora’s Box with signs in hand. Among the possible thousands of demonstrators, PCC students demonstrated alongside musicians Sonny and Cher and future famous actors Jack Nicholson and Peter Fonda.

Hordes of youth blockaded the strip for miles in either direction. As the night unfolded, conflicts escalated past reconciliation as the protesters, fueled

by mounting frustration, began to rock a nearby public transport bus back and forth, pushing passengers and their driver into the chaos of the night.

“Then they knocked out the windows, dented the roof with an uprooted street sign and let the air out of the tires,” Rasmussen wrote. “One youth tried unsuccessfully to drop lighted matches into the fuel tank... He was booked for attempted arson. Protesters hurled rocks and bottles and smashed storefront windows and car windshields.”

The police, who subsequently arrived in full force, employed heavy handed tactics in an attempt to disperse the protesters. They only succeeded in further provoking the restless mob.

As the night wore on, what started as a demonstration of youth dissent quickly devolved into a disastrous confrontation. The police, still reeling from the backlash of their previous response to the Watts Riots, were determined to maintain control, but their aggressive presence only fueled the growing tension.

Steven Kilgore, writing for the Los Angeles Public Library Blog in 2019, described the scenes after protesters attacked the bus.

“Some off duty marines fought with protesters, and then the cops showed up with an overwhelming force, aggravating and setting off the ensuing mayhem. Police overreaction was partly due to criticism the Police Department received from the Watts Riots a year earlier,” Kilgore wrote.

These dire scenes of conflict on the first night of the Sunset Strip curfew riots would go on to inspire Buffalo Springfield’s Stephen Stills to write “For What It’s Worth”.

With its release a month later in December 1966 and the protests still very much in full effect, the song instantly became the war anthem of choice for the Strip demonstrators. Its poignant lyrics about guns, protests, and paranoia continue to resonate to this day:

**“There’s battle lines being drawn  
Nobody’s right if everybody’s wrong  
Young people speaking their minds  
Getting so much resistance from behind**

**It’s time we stop  
Hey, what’s that sound?  
Everybody look, what’s going down?”**



Despite what the colloquial name “hippie riots” may suggest, the truth was that most of these teens were not true “hippies” by any sense of the word.

“Everyone called them hippies just because some had long hair,” lifelong local of the Sunset Strip and Hollywood historian Marc Wanamaker told the Los Angeles Times. “But they weren’t the flower-power types from San Francisco, just rock ‘n’ roll fans, mostly students.”

In fact, even the idea that this was a “riot” is largely disputed by Stills.

“Riot is a ridiculous name. It was a funeral for Pandora’s Box,” Stills said in an archived interview with Los Angeles Times. “But it looked like a revolution.”

Whether they were rioters or revolutionaries, hippies or heroes, one fact remained undeniable. Between 900 to 3,000 were present on that night, all united under a single purpose- to demand

that their freedoms, as the next generation of Los Angeles’ countercultural epicenter, not be stripped from them.

In a Nov. 30, 1966 issue of the PCC Courier, executive editor Dusty Greene would use his platform to voice his support and interest in joining the ongoing protests in the paper’s editorial column.

“I think I’ll get out my old “Ban the Bomb” sign and go down to the Sunset Strip and protest a while,” Greene wrote. “Granted the slogan doesn’t quite fit the occasion, but who will notice what it says anyway? They insist on enforcing an out[dated] 10 p.m. curfew.... Since no one would listen to the suggestion of a curfew revision, the teenagers finally found a more forceful way to make themselves heard.”

For the rest of the year, the youth continued to flood the streets, as protests flared up intermittently.

On Christmas Day, 1966, Pandora’s Box reopened to hold one final show, with Stephen Stills and Buffalo Springfield debuting “For What It’s Worth”. By Aug. 3,

1967, the nightclub was demolished and shut down permanently. No sign of it or the triangular shaped site on which it sat remains today.

As the protests subsided by January 1967, the message of anti-authority upheld by Los Angeles’ youth left an indelible mark on the countercultural movement, marking one of the first significant moments of youth resistance to authority in the United States.

Nearly six decades later, the counterculture movement of the 1960’s remains a defining moment in history, a time when the youth boldly voiced their opinions regardless of the authority that sought to control them. That spirit of rebellion and self-expression still lives on today, as young people continue to use their voices and platforms to challenge the status quo, advocate for change, and fight for the values they believe in.

On Apr. 30, 2024, an estimated 300 PCC students and faculty participated in nationwide protests against the Israeli

government’s military actions in Palestine and its occupation of Palestinian territories, demanding that their institutions divest from companies linked to Israel. The protest, led by PCC’s Anti-War Club, was part of a broader movement demanding that institutions divest from companies supporting Israel’s military and its ongoing settlement expansion.

While the walkout at PCC remained peaceful, tensions escalated nationwide. As The New York Times reported on July 22, 2024, more than 3,100 people were arrested or detained across U.S. campuses since student protests intensified in April.

While demonstrations had largely declined by the summer of 2024, discussions surrounding divestment at PCC have continued, especially after the PCC Courier revealed the institution’s investments in companies targeted for boycott by pro-Palestine activists in March. This led the Associated Students at Pasadena City College to pass a resolution on May 8, 2024, advocating for divestment by July 2025.

The efforts of on-campus organizations such as the PCC Anti-War Club and Associated Students reflect a broader movement

of youth-driven change at PCC. Just The efforts of on-campus organizations such as the PCC Anti-War Club and Associated Students reflect a broader movement of youth-driven change at PCC. Just as the protesters on Sunset Strip did nearly 60 years ago, today’s students continue to challenge authority, advocate for change, and use their platforms to demand justice.

In many ways, the struggle remains the same as it has been since the 1960’s counterculture movement—pushing for justice, peace, and equity. Like their predecessors, the students at PCC and across the nation today serve as a powerful voice for transformation, shaping the future with their unwavering commitment to social change. ■

# A War of Opinions

by Elizabeth Bouza

The Vietnam War lasted from 1955 to 1975, and American involvement motivated citizens who wanted their voices heard so that progress could prevail. Many college students participated in protests, and PCC was no exception. Beyond the protests, opinions about Vietnam were also expressed to the Courier through letters from passionate community members.

## PCC Students Hold Protest on the War

Over 250 students took to the streets of Pasadena last Thursday to protest the new war policies of President Nixon. The student march to the Nixon headquarters at Green and Lake streets. Antiwar activities began with a rally on the Campus Center steps on Wednesday. A crowd of several hundred was addressed by Ida Honoroff, who spoke to the crowd about pesticides. Rodas Regnier, 54th Assembly district president; and Ray Thursh. An announcement was made that the Nixon headquarters would be made instead of Friday. Despite the massed to hear wounded Vietnam veterans' speech, the group gathered at the Nixon headquarters. The march was quiet. Upon their return to the administration building, college President Armen Sarkisian right of the demonstrators dispersed. Following the Sarafian dispersed.

**We didn't fight to tie War II and we saw the of our enemies. We did to win in Korea and we an armed aggressor that soldiers and captures our ships. The conclusion is obvious.**

War in Vietnam will end only when Americans ask, "Why not victory?" and follow with decisive military and naval action to win a victory.

—A Sophomore Veteran

Dear Editor:

Why are American soldiers fighting in Viet Nam? Are they over there to save democracy, to preserve the right of self-determination for the South Vietnamese people. My answer to this question would be an emphatic no.

I believe that our military forces are in Viet Nam for purely imperialistic reasons, to extend the economic and political power of the American capitalist class and its executive committee, the capitalist state.

As students voiced their opinions through protests and writing, they also showed activism through involvement in campus life. Even after the war's conclusion in the 1970's, students still had things to say. Sylvia Cann's column stands out among the variety of commentary and reflections on the war written by male authors, as women were often excluded from anti-war protests and activism groups. In the same edition is a feature on Ron Kovic, a veteran and PCC student who is studying to be a teacher. Kovic's autobiography went on to become an Oscar-winning biopic starring Tom Cruise.

### Anti-War Movement

The months of getting back into society are hard. He finds comfort in other Vietnam veterans and moves to California. He attends PCC for one week before joining the anti-war movement.

Then come the speeches, the demonstrations. At a protest in Los Angeles an undercover agent, posing as a veteran, dumps Kovic out of his wheelchair. He is kicked, his medals are torn from his chest, he is handcuffed and thrown back on his wheelchair. He cannot balance himself in that position and keeps falling forward; the agent keeps pushing him back until Kovic screams, "I have no stomach muscles, don't you understand?"

### Canndid Comments

## Vietnam Repeat?

Sylvia Cann

"History repeats itself, and about 27,000 in 1965. The American will be sending 'advisers,' another that's one of wrong with his Clarence Darrow. On the other can learn from it, and then a same regretta recurring. Unfortunately careful, Darrow proven true on east Asia. On July 1, I dered an im about \$3.5 mil rities to aid forces when the of Vietnamese Cambodia. Ti \$600 million i military equip and other ite United States.

in his armored limousine. It wasn't our parents, too old to fight, who stopped it. It was those *damned* college students, who marched, protested orated, sat in and in general despised the very concept of war! Without them it still might be going on. Along came the seventies and eighties, and for America the war was over.

America has slid back into the mentality of the fifties. Americans think they are safe. They think that South Africa, South America, the Middle East and the Philippines are just distant dreams. That attitude is the essence of my fears. The four horsemen loom again and soon Americans will again be playing their country's favorite economic game. It will happen because they have forgotten the bitter lessons of the past. They have forgotten what it really means to be a student. Students must learn, not only for the grades and the money, but so they can learn the mistakes of the past and never make them again. They must question things, seek the truth, oppose injustice. That is why they're really here!

How does this affect you? If you don't start to change the world *now, today*, you might wind up like the lonely vet in the cafeteria, sitting alone, tormented by the past, living the reoccurring nightmare, STILL IN SAIGON!

Today, Pasadena City College remembers Vietnam through a wall made of smooth black stone, which sits in front of the Arts building. Upon seeing that wall, you can almost see the pain, loss, fighting spirit, and strength of those who fought, along with all those who rallied, wrote, marched, and mourned.



Free Palestine protest at PCC April. 30 2024. Photo / Seamus Bozeman



# A Promise Into The Future

by Fern Rojas & Zaynab Tall

**We are facing unprecedented times**, or so we are frequently told today.

The United States is in a constitutional crisis. The United States is complicit in the genocide of Gazan Palestinians. The United States continues to revel and participate in human rights abuses happening in El Salvador. These injustices are ongoing and continue to evolve. But, as we believe this issue demonstrates, they are not quite unprecedented after all.

In 1941, President Roosevelt used the Alien Enemies Act to justify the incarceration of Japanese-Americans, even those who were naturalized citizens. One of those Japanese-Americans was a PCC alumna and our fellow student, and her story opened this issue.

Today, in 2025, President Trump is again invoking the Alien Enemies Act to justify the unlawful incarceration—at times, even deportation—of naturalized immigrants. Particularly affecting us as students is the revoking of student visas, with little or no reasons given. And once again, PCC is included.

On April 15, PCC students had our Spring Break interrupted by an email from President José A. Gómez. We were informed that two of our fellow students had their visas revoked, and that the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office was investigating the situation statewide.

"This is a difficult time for some of our students," President Gómez wrote. "The stories of revocations have raised fears, worry and uncertainty. This is not the climate we want for any of our students."

Ten days later, before students had had time to fully process this news, we had to readjust to the next act in this American farce. News that the Department of Justice was not, actually, revoking visas after all, hit the headlines of the New York Times, Politico, etc.

The news was not reassuring. With such important decisions being in the hands of a volatile and childish executive branch, our fears and worry and uncertainty are only increased. For our two international students, as of our last update in the Courier, one student has had their visa reinstated. The other case's resolution is still unknown.

Reporter Colin Haskins, in the Courier update, wrote that the DOJ's handling was "sparking fear, legal battles, and uncertainty for students studying in the United States."

While two student were singled out during this news, every foreign student at PCC is affected by the DOJ's agenda. And as the Constitutional rights of our foreign students are jeopardized, concerns grow for the natural-born American students as well. If the rights of even one PCC student are threatened, that is a threat to the entire student body.

Many of these students already deal with enough fear and uncertainty; they've uprooted their lives seeking better opportunities for themselves and their families. PCC associate professor Melissa Michelson teaches citizenship classes, with most of her students being F1-Visa holders.

"When I do teach, it's really tricky for me to say we have [the] first

amendment, but then when we look on TV or social media or the news, we don't," said Michelson.

As a fully student-led and student-authored publication, Spotlight Magazine declares solidarity with our peers and colleagues. We also express our gratitude to the faculty and staff members who are working on behalf of their students, making immigration resources available and centering these topics in their classrooms. Many of these professors are left wondering about the circumstances and safety of their undocumented students.

"Now more than ever, it is important that we stand together to defend international and undocumented students and community members. PCC's excellence is owed to the diversity of our campus," said Giselle Miralles, professor of English and director of the Writing Success Center. "Unfortunately, the Trump administration is creating a culture of immense fear through attempts to intimidate, divide, and tear apart our communities. While the Trump administration has attempted to delegitimize the status of students across the country, I think it is important for students to understand that they belong at PCC no matter what. Any policies that threaten students' ability to learn without fear and remain in this country are illegitimate in my eyes. Education

is not a privilege; it is a right and should be accessible to all people, not

**"Any policies that threaten students' ability to learn without fear and remain in this country are illegitimate in my eyes."**

PCC English professor Giselle Miralles

gatekept only for those with status or financial means. We as a campus community have held strong in showing our support and standing in solidarity, and I hope we continue to stay committed to resisting these racist and xenophobic agendas in every way we can."

On Feb. 12, PCC did release a resolution in response to the government's attack on undocumented students. On the surface, the resolution seems to satisfy the preemptive move Michelson desired and the protections students are so desperately seeking, but close reading of the resolution reveals PCC will comply if legally required. Michelson was also upset about the resolution's blindspots, specifically regarding faculty and staff.

In March, the Trump administration deported Brown University professor Rasha Alawieh, despite her having a valid work visa and a court order blocking her expulsion. More than students are at stake; faculty and staff are in danger too.

"It's happening all over the US," Michelson said. "I'd rather PCC come out on in front of that before it actually happens to us or to

Opposite: On a cultural trip to meet with the staff of California Representative Jimmy Gomez, high school student Alejandro Dueñas faces the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. on April 16, 2025. Photo / Graciela Franquez



our students and to our faculty. Our academic freedom is under attack and it has been for a long time. I think we're all responsible. So students, faculty, and the board of trustees. We should all be on the united front there, and take it all upon ourselves to protect each other. Now, family members and friends are being scooped up and taken away, and other college students...people are under attack.

"You can't stick your head in the ground and say, 'Oh, but on this campus or on college campuses, they shouldn't even be talking about politics.' They're taking classes in politics. Give me a break. That's crazy. We're talking about deportations and now F-1 visa blocking and attacks on other universities that have been supportive for the Palestinian movement and/or free speech."

Michelson reached out to PCC's Academic Senate in hopes of releasing a statement of support. Yet, the Senate, which represents the faculty, stated it was not in their purview to make statements on the national issues affecting PCC's staff and students.

The deflective response from PCC's senate resembles that of federal bodies. This is bigger than visa revocations. If government officials, states, and educational institutions continue in their complicity, American democracy will be destroyed. One day we'll wake up and ask ourselves, "How did we get here?" The answer: because of what we're doing, or not doing, right now.

These issues are endemic to the United States and always have been. In the words of the Pipil poet Javier Zamora, who immigrated from El Salvador to Arizona: "I have always known this country wants me dead."

"Now, family members and friends are being scooped up and taken away, and other college students... people are under attack."

PCC professor Melissa Michelson

We are, have been, and always will be the independent student voice of Pasadena City College. That includes immigrant students and visiting foreign students. It includes Japanese-American students and students who are Black and Indigenous and People of Color. It includes the LGBTQIA+ students and the Muslim students. It includes the students with diagnosed and undiagnosed physical and mental health needs. And the voice of these students says:

*We are still here.* ■



# You are not alone

by Karen Mariana Cardenas Ceballos



When *Courier* writer Jessica Martinez met Rambo, she was in a strong depressive state. Yet it was important for her to build a routine for Rambo. "I just wanted to be laying in bed and be depressed," Jessica said. But dogs need to go outside.

"Something that has helped me with him is that I have a routine. Even though there's things that I go through in life that are heartbreaking and very traumatic, no matter what I have to get up tomorrow to take him to the park.

"When I go out on walks with him, he has taught me to just let it go and be in the moment. I find myself a lot now on our walks and our play sessions just being there in this moment with him."

Jessica's belief is that dogs don't have much time on Earth and their time is precious, "so why am I going to spend it worrying about things that I can't fix? I want to make sure that I experience it to the fullest."

The connection she has with Rambo is like a mother and son. It's given her the chance to be the kind of mother figure she never had herself, to give Rambo the love she wishes she had received. It's an opportunity for her to experience healing from her own childhood.

Mental health has been an important topic in recent years, especially for younger generations. More people are open to talking about it, questioning

themselves, and breaking old patterns. Education has been crucial to have awareness of what has been taught at home or what is normalized in our families, especially among immigrant families where mental health is taboo.

Many students are also learning to recognize mental health issues, get a diagnosis, and seek treatment. Understanding certain behaviors and how they affect relationships is part of this process.

Dr. Andrea Bailey, is a licensed clinical psychologist for PCC's Student Health services, has been working in college mental health for 13 years.

"Even seven or eight years ago, there was an increase in folks accessing mental health services. In the age of information-sharing right now, between social media and all these other kinds of things, [there is] a lot more information out there about mental health in general," Bailey said. "It often feels like therapy services are shrouded in mystery."

Pasadena City College has been taking mental health seriously. Besides Mental Health & Wellness Services, the Intercultural Center is another great place where students can find support and guidance, with free events and workshops to promote mental wellness.

Yvonne Yu is an international psychology student at PCC from China. She comes from





work, social life, family, and personal challenges can feel overwhelming. But let me tell you, you're not alone. The reality is that everyone is going through something and you have two choices: struggle on your own or take the time to find resources that can make your life a bit lighter and finding a supportive community can make a huge difference. It takes a lot of courage, deciding to take control of your own circumstances and transform trauma: into inspiration, into art or anything that can contribute to your mental clarity.

That's what relationships like Jessica and Rambo's can

provide. Jessica had come back to PCC to finish her associate's degree after nine years, but the depression was still affecting her. "I took Rambo under my thumb," she said. Jessica expressed that she started to experience a lot of love from Rambo in ways that she hasn't experienced through her life. "That was like the first first one ever."

The Department of Mental Health and Wellness Services acknowledges that crises don't just happen during business hours. Their office services are from Monday - Friday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. After 4:00 pm crisis hours are offered where you are contacted with a live therapist.

"It doesn't matter whether it's for 4:05, or it's 2:00 in the morning on Christmas morning.

It doesn't matter. They can call that number and be connected with a therapist," Bailey said. "The world is unpredictable. This year has been a year full of unpredictability, right? Whether it is folks who are undocumented, whether it's our queer and LGBT folks—especially

our trans folks who are unnecessarily targeted. Whether it's folks who face the ramifications of climate change in the form of the fire this year. There are so many different ways that life throws trauma and unpredictability at us," Dr. Bailey said. "I can't change what happened. But sometimes what we can change is our systems of inequity in our world, and therapy can be a great place to start to explore the impact of those things. Therapy can also be about how to take care of yourself in the midst of a very unjust world."

Jessica has been exploring different resources besides therapy, where she encourages others to allow themselves to find additional tools to improve their mental clarity. It can be fun and exciting to find out what your heart and body enjoys.

"I would tell students and people who want to continue on that journey, don't be embarrassed of what you're going through," Jessica said. "Vocalize to somebody, whether it be the school or someone you can confide in, even just speaking what emotions you're going through." ■

Rambo takes a rest after a hard day of chasing tennis balls. Photo / Jessica Martinez



Previous page: Students on the steps of the D building at PCC. Top left: Jessica Martinez and Rambo invite you into their home. Below: International student Yvonne Yu. Photos / Anastasia Kiek



a very different background and educational system. Yvonne changed her major twice. PCC counselors told her that they believe in her potential to succeed and follow her dreams.

"I don't think I would have had that courage to change to psychology if I would have stayed in my country," Yvonne said. In her culture, STEM majors are considered better than any other field. For Yvonne, it is more important to do something that she's more interested in rather than what makes more money and this mindset changed while she's been living abroad.

"I want to learn something that is really useful and I am really passionate about."

Yvonne is willing to help others, particularly when psychology can be intimidating to students. Making therapy less intimidating is also one of Dr. Bailey's goals.

"I often say to students in those initial sessions what an act of bravery it is to come into therapy for the first time. It can feel very overwhelming at first to answer questions about yourself," Dr. Bailey said. "Sometimes students come in and they have an intake, and they say 'that's not for me right now.' And that's okay. You're not making a commitment by coming in so giving it a shot. Seeing what feels right is okay too."

As students, struggling college,

## Altadena: To the homes we lost in the Eaton Fire

Edited by Laura Dux

On January 7, 2025 the Eaton Fire burned across Altadena, destroying over 9,000 structures and killing 18 people. Over 650 students and 100 employees at PCC lost their homes.

We asked faculty, Courier staff, and alumni to write a letter to their home and to Altadena, as we collectively grieve what was lost.

Dear home,

I miss you.

Losing everything is hard, but losing the place you call home is unsettling. I'm unsure what to think of any place other than our home in Altadena: Is this new house really home?

Our home in Altadena that was destroyed in The Eaton Fire was so much more than just a roof over our heads. It was a place where we had all the little things that made it home for us from the sentimental photos, art, dishes, furniture, to the mundane like a pan that I've cooked nearly every breakfast in my whole life.

This space for our family was a space for community gatherings, little out of the blue parties to celebrations more revered-like holding space as my father was dying and celebrations following his death.

- Seamus Bozeman,  
Courier alumni

Dear House,

You old juggernaut. Built 1912 with bones of ancient redwoods that hardened like steel. You held sturdy through earthquakes and storms. Fended off water and termites but found your match in the heat of fire.

In 1970, you became an experiment - a new way to more traditionally house "unadoptable" older foster children - considered unlikely to find parents. When the clinical model shifted, you were abandoned for a while, and we discovered you in a poor state.

You let us restore your every detail.

In 2020 you welcomed two more older foster children just as a global pandemic set in, becoming an entire ecosystem - a universe - for our newly forming family.

House, you did your job well and honored those great redwoods. Now it is time for you to replenish the Earth. You will transform, as we all will, from one purpose to another. Rest well.

And thank you.

- Liesel Reinhart,  
PCC Professor

Dear Altadena community,

Almost twelve years ago, I moved to California from Colorado and as we neared our new home in Altadena, I was struck by how much the mountains reminded me of home, along with a little bit of shock added by the palm trees in front of the view. I think that's why I felt so comfortable there so quickly, that and the neighborhood was quiet. You could see the stars at night. It was beautiful and peaceful.

Altadena has a sense of community, even now with many of us scattered to different cities and some further than others, neighbors are checking in on neighbors and the online communities are alive and well. I miss the Altadena that once existed and I have hope that one day we can get some semblance of that back.

- Melissa Flim,  
Courier staff writer



**SPOTLIGHT**

2025

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