



SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

*Student of
Distinction Award
2013*



**Alfredo
Calderon**

Major: Physics (Astrophysics)

Main Educational Goal: Transfer to CalTech, UC, UCLA, UCSB or UCSC and earn a Ph.D. in the field of Astrophysics.

Life Goals: To become a university physics professor and work for NASA. I would like to establish space oriented future generations.

Significant Achievements:

- Certified Volunteer Tax Preparer
- PTS Mentor
- SDG&E Civic Leadership Mentor
- Tutor at the MESA Center
- Student Representative for the Honors Committee

How would you like others to remember you?

As a gentleman who always offers help with a friendly attitude, has an outgoing personality and a passion for learning, and as the guy that has the Scooby-doo lunchbox.

Nominated by: Dr. Raga Bakhiet, Karen Cliffe, Alexander Juden and Raul Soto



**Stephanie
Castruita**

Major: Biology

Main Educational Goal: To obtain an MD in Emergency Medicine.

Life Goals: To become a Pediatric Emergency Physician and be involved in various non-profit organizations that actively promote treating health disparities in disadvantaged third world countries. I would like to join forces with other physicians in creating a program meant for disadvantaged, but driven students who are interested in the medical fields, such as the programs that shaped my life.

Significant Achievements:

- ASO Campus Involvement Award; Metallic Power Technology Award; SCCDAA Award
- Research Assistant in Dr. Percy Russell's Biochemistry lab, UC San Diego School of Medicine
- Secretary of AMSA; Member of Phi Theta Kappa, MESA, Chemistry Club
- Sharp Chula Vista ER Volunteer
- Healing Hearts Across the Border

How would you like others to remember you?

As a kind and intelligent person, like the words Nelson Mandela speaks, "A good head and good heart are always a formidable combination, but when you add to that, a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special."

Nominated by: Dr. Raga Bakhiet and Joann Um



**Lina
Chankar**

Major: Business Administration and Journalism

Main Educational Goal: To transfer and obtain a Bachelor's degree and later obtain a Master's degree.

Life Goals: To be a journalist, while remaining an active member of the community by volunteering and participating in human rights activities.

Significant Achievements:

- Campus Editor for the Southwestern College Sun
- Former Assistant News Editor for the Southwestern College Sun
- Volunteer Award
- Leadership Award

How would you like others to remember you?

By the contributions I have made to the community and human rights.

Nominated by: Dr. Max Branscomb



**Laura
Jessica Del
Castillo**

Major: Political Science

Main Educational Goal: To go to UC Berkeley, double major in Political Science and Sociology, and attend Harvard Law School.

Life Goals: To be a lawyer to pursue environmental protection and human rights in the United States. Before attending Law school, I plan on joining the Peace Corps and going to Peru to help low income families through initiating community development projects. Eventually, I will use my knowledge in law and my experience in community development to become a political leader and help my community here at home.

Significant Achievements:

- 2011–2012 Puente Co-President
- 2013 SWC Hall of Fame: Student Athlete of the Year for Women's Soccer
- 2013 Associated Student Organization Senator-at-Large
- SWC Service Learning Volunteer
- Phi Theta Kappa International Honors Society

How would you like others to remember you?

As someone who believed she could make a difference if she worked hard, helped others, and was never afraid to try even when something seemed impossible.

Nominated by: Dr. Angelica Suarez



**Hector
Alonso
Rico Diaz,
Jr.**

Major: Psychology

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Ph.D./PsiD.

Life Goals: To conduct research on Mexicans in marginal areas to learn how the neoliberals are affecting the Mexican culture and how this impacts the origins of Pre-Hispanic philosophy, art, and tradition.

Significant Achievements:

- 2013–2014 PTS Chair
- Associated Student Organization Senator
- Leader in Jesuit Missionary Activity
- Member of Puente
- Awarded the David Twomey Award by Emerson College Students and Staff

How would you like others to remember you?

He stood united and broke the silence.

Nominated by: Vivien Vaughan



**Nickolas
Furr**

Major: Journalism

Main Educational Goal: To earn my Associate's degree in Journalism, and possibly consider transferring to a four-year school to study Journalism and Business.

Life Goals: To walk into a brick-and-mortar bookstore and see a stand display of books with my name on them. Aside from that, I'd like to just be a successful journalist and writer of fiction.

Significant Achievements:

- Society of Professional Journalists Award
- San Diego Press Club Award
- Journalism Association of Community Colleges Award
- ADDY award-winning freelance writer
- Senior staff writer for the Southwestern College Sun

How would you like others to remember you?

He's not nice and he's not polite, but unless you're corrupt, dishonest, unethical, or incompetent, he's on your side.

Nominated by: Dr. Max Branscomb



**Ivan G.
Ulloa
Garcia**

Major: Electrical Engineering

Main Educational Goal: Transfer to SDSU/UCSD and earn a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Electrical Engineering.

Life Goals: To aid in the development of medical technologies using engineering applications, create new solutions to the growing energy and apply electrical engineering science in the development of military technologies.

Significant Achievements:

- 2006 – Honor High School Graduate
- 2009 – Army Commendation Medal, Operation Battle Blitz, Iraq
- 2010 – Combat Engineer Team Leader, Operation Iraqi Freedom
- 2010 – 18th Engineer Company Soldier of the Month, Fort Lewis, WA

How would you like others to remember you?

Remember me through any inspiration that I may have caused, as someone responsible, loyal and crazy.

Nominated by: Mary Jo Horvath



**Maria
Llamas
Haro**

Major: Paralegal Bilingual

Main Educational Goal: To earn an Associate's degree from Southwestern College then start work as a paralegal.

Life Goals: To start a company or business where as a paralegal I will fill and process documents at affordable prices for low income individuals. I will also specialize in other services, such as income tax, and notary public and translation services.

Significant Achievements:

- Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and President's Club
- WEX (Work Experience Project) Intern at San Diego Realty Excellence
- Volunteer at my children's school
- Notary Public

How would you like others to remember you?

As a strong spirited woman who defeated her destiny to go after her dreams.

Nominated by: Roger (Rusty) Nichols



**Jose
Hernandez**

Major: Business Management

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to USC to obtain a Bachelor's degree in Business Management and then attend law school.

Life Goals: To become an attorney involved in corporate law, then later in life run for U.S. Senator or represent a district in the House of Representatives.

Significant Achievements:

- Campaign Event/Volunteer Coordinator representing the SWC region for Obama's 2012 Presidential Campaign "Organizing for America"
- Associated Student Organization Senator-At-Large
- Sitting member of various committees, including two ASO Constitution Committees and five college standing committees
- Volunteer serving 150+ hours for the South Bay Little League

How would you like others to remember you? As a proactive member of the SWC community, who could persevere through adversity, overcome obstacles, accept failure and yet still succeed.

Nominated by: Dr. Angelica Suarez



**Vanessa
Christine
Hidalgo**

Major: Writing/Literature

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to California College of the Arts in the fall 2013 with a merit scholarship.

Life Goals: To be a published writer.

Significant Achievements:

- Member of Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society
- Volunteer at Project Donate, Muscular Dystrophy Disease Association and TJ orphanages
- First in my family to be accepted into a university

How would you like others to remember you?

As a great writer, a creative person, a caring friend, and a humble and honest student who never gave up on achieving her goals.

Nominated by: Noreen Maddox



**Alberto G.
Juarez**

Major: Biotechnology

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Master's degree and Ph.D. in Neurobiology.

Life Goals: To become one of the lead researchers in epilepsy and work at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, and to create my own non-profit organization in Africa to help those who have epilepsy.

Significant Achievements:

- ASO Campus Involvement Award
- Secretary and Vice President of AMSA; Vice President of Chemistry Club
- Research Assistant in Dr. Percy Russell's Biochemistry lab, UC San Diego School of Medicine
- Healing Hearts Across the Border
- AACR Undergraduate Student Caucus and Poster Competition at Washington, D.C.

How would you like others to remember you?

Through the words of Albert Einstein, "1% genius and 99% hard worker."

Nominated by: Dr. Raga Bakhiet and Joann Um



**Bazz
Youssif
Hamid
Darwish
Khurshid**

Major: Philosophy

Main Educational Goal: To receive my Jurist Doctorate (JD) with an emphasis in intellectual property.

Life Goals: To become a philanthropist who focuses on providing relief and opportunity for orphans.

Significant Achievements:

- 2011-2012 Phi Theta Kappa Officer
- 2011-2012 Inter-Club Council Representative of the Year Award
- 2011-2012 Mathematical Engineering Science Achievement Leadership Certificate
- 2013 Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship recipient
- SWC Service Learning Volunteer

How would you like others to remember you? With love.

Nominated by: Dr. Raja Bakhiet, Peter Bolland, Alexander Juden and Raul Soto



David
Patrick
McVicker

Major: Journalism

Main Educational Goal: To earn a Master's degree in Journalism from the Columbia Journalism School.

Life Goals: To work in the media and educate at the community college level to help students still finding their way in life, as I once was.

Significant Achievements:

- President's List Member
- Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Member
- Journalism Association of Community Colleges, Southern California President
- Production Manager of the Southwestern College Sun
- Photography Editor for the Southwestern College Sun

How would you like others to remember you?

I helped a lot of people to help themselves because it was important to me to leave the world a better place than it was when I came into it.

Nominated by: Dr. Max Branscomb



Nicole
Montano

Major: Accounting

Main Educational Goal: Acquire an Associate's degree in Accounting, complete Payroll and Micro-Bookkeeping Certificates then earn a Bachelor's degree.

Life Goals: Upon completion of my degree and certificates, obtain a job as an Accountant or Bookkeeper.

Significant Achievements:

- SWC President's List for spring and fall of 2012
- Active member and volunteer in the local Portuguese community
- Volunteer with Ballet Folklorico programs at local elementary school
- Volunteer at local elementary schools with math, reading and writing
- Special education volunteer with the Chula Vista Elementary School District

How would you like others to remember you?

As dependable, hardworking, loving, caring, honest, trust worthy, amazing mother, wife and best friend.

Nominated by: Vern Jorgensen



Cecilie
Prestrud

Major: Industrial Design

Main Educational Goal: Earn a Master's degree.

Life Goals: To become a recognized industrial designer with a good carrier. Eventually, I hope to be able to sell some of my products on an international level.

Significant Achievements:

- President and Vice President's List
- Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Member
- Association of Norwegian Students Abroad Member
- Speak three languages (Norwegian, English and German)
- Volunteer at Save the Children

How would you like others to remember you? As a cheerful person that was helpful in providing new insights, ideas and knowledge.

Nominated by: Ed Cosio



Ernesto
Rivera

Major: Journalism

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to CSU Chico this fall and double major in Journalism and Public Relations. While at Chico I hope to be a part and become a leader of their student-managed newspaper and public relations group.

Life Goals: I hope one day I can be a journalist who uses his voice in the media to help better represent misrepresented and underrepresented communities and to bring important issues in these communities to the forefront of public discussions. I also hope that one day I can be a communications director for a cause or organization I believe in and use my skills to promote change that creates a better world.

Significant Achievements:

- Over 20 journalism related awards and honors, including national awards in writing and graphic design
- Press release writer and photographer for the SWC Office of Communications and Government Relations
- Online/multimedia editor for the Southwestern College Sun
- Interned at UT San Diego for the newspaper's Editorial Board

How would you like others to remember you?

As someone who is eternally indebted to this school, its faculty, and its staff, because they all believed in me and gave me the greatest opportunities imaginable.

Nominated by: Dr. Max Branscomb



**Jesus
Rodriguez**

Major: Physics and Mechanical Engineering

Main Educational Goal: To transfer and achieve a Master's degree in Physics and Mechanical Engineering, and get a Doctorate degree in Physics.

Life Goals: To continue to do research in particle physics, or keep doing research for mechanical engineering.

Significant Achievements:

- 2011 San Diego County Library, Imperial Branch Volunteer of the Year
- MESA Academic Excellence Workshop Host (PHYS 272)
- SDG&E Civic Leadership Mentor
- MESA Tutor
- Involvement with Center for Sensorimotor Neural Engineering Research at SDSU

How would you like others to remember you?

As someone who is a hard worker, enjoys learning new things, and is easy to talk to.

Nominated by: Dr. Raga Bakhiet and Raul Soto



**Michael
Stinson**

Major: History

Main Educational Goal: I am passionate about history and serving my community. After earning a Bachelor's degree I intend to pursue graduate studies in history and teach at the high school or college level. Filled with passion, I hope to inspire the next generation as a teacher, helping students look at the world with different eyes.

Life Goals: I will pursue a doctorate in History and invigorate students with what is often perceived as a dull subject. I would like to restore local historical sites and motivate the next generation to do the same. Being an author is also a life goal, with the specific intent of writing children's books and historical references.

Significant Achievements:

- Viewpoints Editor for the Southwestern College Sun
- Volunteer Coordinator for 2010 Annual World History Association
- Co-event Captain for the National Science Olympiad
- Volunteer with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- President's List

How would you like others to remember you?

As a person who had the courage to do what's right, no matter the repercussions.

Nominated by: Dr. Max Branscomb and Laura Ryan



**Marissa
Stratton**

Major: Psychology

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to SDSU, graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a minor in Communications, attend graduate school and earn a Doctorate degree in Psychology.

Life Goals: To become a therapist working with young women or veterans empowering and encouraging them to achieve success.

Significant Achievements:

- Associated Student Organization Academic Excellence Scholarship
- Vice President's Honors List
- Officer for Psi Beta Honor Society

How would you like others to remember you?

As a loving sister, a brave daughter, a bold leader, a vibrant spirit and a determined young woman.

Nominated by: Danielle McAneney



**Melody
Sycks**

Major: Biology

Main Educational Goal: To transfer to Cal Poly Pomona in fall 2013 and complete a degree in Chemistry with emphasis in Biochemistry.

Life Goals: Attain a Ph.D. in a biomedical research based field, becoming the primary investigator of a laboratory, and paying college tuition for my three children.

Significant Achievements:

- 2011–2012 Inter Club Council Representative for SWC Biology Club
- 2012 Research Intern with National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD
- Executive Vice President of the Associated Student Organization
- Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society Member
- Proud MESA Student

How would you like others to remember you?

As the proud mother of three who succeeded in science against the odds.

Nominated by: Dr. Raga Bakhiet