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Citrus College Celebrates Alumni Month, Names 2018 Distinguished Alumni Recipient

Glendora, Calif. (May 30, 2018) – This May, as has been the tradition of the college since 2011, Citrus College is celebrating Alumni Month by honoring graduates who are a strong force behind the college's growth and progress.

Long after they cast their mortarboards into the sky, Citrus College alumni continue to contribute to institutional success. Whether they are supporting college services by donating their time, ideas or financial resources, or advancing the college's reputation within their professions and communities, they serve as role models by forging paths for others to follow. Many alumni are also active with the Citrus Alumni & Friends Association or the Citrus College Foundation, as both organizations exist to further the college's goal of success and completion for its students.

By recognizing the vision and hard work of alumni, Citrus College hopes to bridge the gap between college completion and finding a rewarding career for its current student body.

"When our students hear about the tremendous academic and career accomplishments of our alumni, they realize that achieving their own dreams is possible," said Dr. Geraldine M. Perri, superintendent/president of Citrus College. "Alumni Month is a time for the college to pause and reflect on the triumphs of its past students, but also, perhaps even more importantly, to highlight a successful path for future generations."

The crowning moment of Citrus College's Alumni Month is the naming of its Distinguished Alumni Award recipient. Each year, for over half a century, the college singles out alumni who have set an example through their professional and lifelong development, community service, and influence at Citrus College, and awards them with the honorary title. Former recipients include medical professionals, lawyers, business executives, artists, educators, performers, civil servants and skilled workers.

This year's recipient is Karen M. Cullen, Citrus College class of 1964. A fearless educator and selfless community leader, she is the great-granddaughter of Glendora's first permanent settler, William B. Cullen, a civil war veteran who arrived in 1874. In an unbroken line, Ms. Cullen, her extended family, siblings, mother, father and grandfather all attended Citrus College.

After graduating from Citrus College and the University of La Verne, Ms. Cullen moved to Connecticut in the late 1960s where she began a teaching career. She eventually made her way to the South. As our nation was experiencing social change during the civil rights movement, Ms. Cullen insisted on teaching

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in schools serving African-American students as well as white students. When she walked onto campus, as the first-and-only Caucasian teacher, she unknowingly became a pioneer in racial integration efforts.

Her involvement in the local community is equally impressive. After moving back to Glendora, Ms. Cullen rolled up her sleeves to assist with Empty Bowls, an annual fundraising event founded by Citrus College alumni and established in partnership with the college's ceramics program. Empty Bowls features ceramic bowls created by Citrus College students and faculty, and the results have been significant by providing more than 100,000 meals and raising over \$70,000 to combat hunger. She served on the board of directors of the Glendora Historical Society and helped organize the Dreams to Reality program at Rubel Castle, which helps local alternative high school students envision and realize their dreams. Her vision to develop a community art center eventually resulted in the creation of the Fine Arts Academy in Glendora, where she taught and helped coordinate activities. Ms. Cullen also served as a class substitute for the After Stroke support group at the La Fetra Center in Glendora, and she has volunteered at local rehabilitation, developmentally disabled and residential care facilities. Finally, she was the founder, instructor and program director of the Citrus College Youth Orchestra.

Ms. Cullen did all of this while simultaneously teaching elementary school for another 20 years before her retirement from education.

In addition to receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award, Ms. Cullen will be honored at Citrus College's 102nd annual commencement ceremony on Saturday, June 16, where she will deliver a speech to inspire the thousands in attendance. Ms. Cullen will then be congratulated by her peers and members of the college community at the annual Alumni Reception immediately following the commencement ceremony.

To support student success or to share your own "Citrus Story," contact the Citrus College Foundation at foundation@citruscollege.edu or visit www.citruscollege.edu/foundation.

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ABOUT CITRUS COLLEGE

Proudly serving the San Gabriel Valley for over 100 years, Citrus College educates approximately 20,000 students annually. The college offers 90 associate degrees and certificates of achievement, prepares students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities, and provides basic skills courses and workforce training. Located in Glendora, California, Citrus College is the oldest community college in Los Angeles County. Its 104-acre campus includes eight outdoor athletic facilities. A leader in higher education, Citrus College has received numerous accolades, including being ranked first in the nation for awarding associate degrees in visual and performance arts for Hispanic students, and 12th in the nation for the number of associate degrees awarded to Hispanic students. Citrus College is also designated a Military Friendly® school. For more information, visit www.citruscollege.edu.

Citrus College

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