



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Doug Schultz
Communications Supervisor
626-852-6497
dschultz@citruscollege.edu

Community Gathers to Honor Veterans at Citrus College Ceremony

Glendora, Calif. (Nov. 14, 2017) – On Nov. 8, Citrus College hosted the 12th annual Saluting Our Veterans ceremony in partnership with Azusa Pacific University (APU) and the cities of Azusa and Glendora. This event, held every year during the week of Veterans Day, is set aside to thank all those who served honorably in the military, in both war and peacetime.

The celebration continued the college’s long history of recognizing veterans within the community. Open to the public, the event was attended by the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees; Superintendent/President Geraldine M. Perri, Ph.D.; dignitaries from APU; mayors and councilmembers from Azusa and Glendora; California State Senator Anthony Portantino; and California State Assemblymember Blanca E. Rubio. Additionally, representatives from the offices of U.S. Rep. Judy Chu; U.S. Rep. Grace Napolitano; California State Senator Ed Hernandez; California State Assemblymember Chris Holden; Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger; and Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis were in attendance.

“At Citrus College, we are committed to recognizing both student veterans and veterans from the community. Thank you for your service, courage and commitment to our country,” said Dr. Perri. “Citrus College’s culture of support has resulted in wonderful outcomes, and our student veterans continue to make us proud. At the end of the last academic year, 102 student veterans received certificates or associate degrees or transferred to four-year colleges and universities.”

The ceremony began at 11 a.m. on the Campus Center Mall with a prelude of patriotic music performed by the Gladstone High School marching band. Following the performance, the APU Army Reserve Officer Training Corps presented the colors, while Citrus Singers Christian Blass, Israel Lacy and Christian Pineda performed the national anthem. APU Chaplain Col. Rick Givens led the crowd in a moment of silence for fallen veterans, and the Valley Veterans Memorial Team conducted a flag-folding ceremony accompanied by a three-volley salute.

Dr. Martha McDonald, the vice president of Student Services at Citrus College and a Marine, introduced four veteran honorees: U.S. Army Capt. Christopher R. Abalo, Glendora’s honoree; U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Edward Alvarez, Azusa’s honoree; U.S. Navy Seaman Walter Seegers, Citrus College’s honoree; and U.S. Navy Capt. Janet E. Wessels, APU’s honoree.

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Capt. Abalo's mother, Patty Abalo, is a teacher at Powell Elementary School in Azusa. She, along with her entire fourth grade class and Powell Principal Jennifer Wiebe, walked to Citrus College in order to attend the ceremony and pay tribute to her son.

U.S. Army veteran Celia Alvarado, a former Citrus College student and current APU student, and U.S. Marine Corps veteran Martin Hernandez Barajas, a current Citrus College and APU student, shared their stories of success with the audience. The event concluded with Citrus College's musical group Night Shift performing "God Bless the USA."

"Hearing the stories of our student veterans was humbling and powerful," said Dr. Barbara R. Dickerson, president of the Citrus Community College District Board of Trustees. "I am proud that Citrus College prioritizes this special ceremony, and I am confident that the college community will continue to honor its veterans and seek new ways to support their success."

Citrus College is a committed advocate for veterans, and its Veterans Success Center is dedicated to serving student veterans and their families by facilitating the transition from military to civilian life, and providing ongoing support as they achieve their academic, career and life goals.

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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, Calif., 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

1000 W. Foothill Blvd., Glendora, CA 91741
626-963-0323 | www.citruscollege.edu

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