



**CONTRA
COSTA
COLLEGE**

Generational Connections

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The Administration Building at the college's first location in Point Richmond (a decommissioned WW II shipyard), circa 1950. It has since been torn down. The hill behind it is Nicholl Knob. The college then moved to its current campus in San Pablo.

75 Years of Excellence!

Established in 1949, we proudly began our journey with the first classes in Spring 1950. Here's to honoring our legacy and embracing the future together!

Look up the definition of a public community college. You'll find: an undergraduate educational institution that provides education and training primarily for students from its local community. CCC has been educating and interacting with its community for 75 years. That time period encompasses multiple generations, so it is perhaps unsurprising that there are strong connections between the college and the families of the individuals who have been educated and/or employed at CCC over these many years. We will be highlighting some of their stories as we celebrate this milestone anniversary.

- Ellen Geringer

In this issue: The Gordon Family



Dr. Anthony Gordon, Sr. retired in 2000, after 36 years at CCC. He was initially hired to teach in Automotive Services, but after 3 years, became a counselor, eventually teaching full-time in the Psychology Dept. Anthony Gordon, Jr. was hired in the Art Dept as an adjunct professor in 2011, and became a full-time professor in 2015.



Legacy Talks

Passing the Baton from
One Generation to the Next

Did you grow up in the local community?

Tony (Sr)

No; I grew up in Monroe, Louisiana. My family and I moved here when I was hired in 1964.

Anthony (Jr)

Yes.

Did you attend CCC? If so, why did you choose to?

Anthony (Jr)

Yes. I learned to swim here as a kid. I started taking classes (Spanish, computer science) in 7th/8th grade. After high school, the graphic design program I wanted at Cal Poly was severely impacted, so I came to CCC and took art and all my GE classes before transferring to SF State.

How satisfied were you with your experience at CCC?

Tony (Sr)

I loved it! I enjoyed my years in counseling and psychology the most.

Anthony (Jr)

As a student, it was great! I got a lot of support from the art faculty and learned different perspectives from the GE faculty. As a current employee, I have great colleagues and have made some great friends.

What are some of your most positive CCC memories?

Tony (Sr)

Ray Dondero! I wouldn't have been at CCC if he hadn't hired me.

Anthony (Jr)

I really liked the field trips we took in biology class with Pat Brunelle and astronomy with Ken Landon was a blast! Lee Brightman was fun (if profane). Sherry Diestler had us do a demo/informative speech in speech class and I was the model for a student demonstrating ear piercings.

Did you work at CCC?

Anthony (Jr)

When in college, I worked in the summers as an instructional aid for College for Kids. I am now a professor here.

Tony (Sr)

Yes, 36 years. I'd attended Tuskegee University before enlisting in the Army. After my military service, I heard about the CCC job through Tuskegee's job placement bureau. I started teaching in Automotive Services, but after a few years, the college president (Ray Dondero) decided I would be a good counselor and sent me out to the neighborhoods in a mobile counseling van. I loved it! So, I went to SF State for a master's degree in counseling, and then to UC Berkeley for a doctorate in Psychology.

Do you remember seeing any of the musicians, artists, and speakers who have performed at the college?

Tony (Sr)

In the early years, we had an outstanding speaker series that included such speakers as Louis Leakey (an anthropologist).

Anthony (Jr)

Not really; I was really focused on getting my GE units completed.

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I am now a professor here.

What is something at CCC (not class-related) that you enjoyed being part of?

Tony (Sr)

All the events on campus; my fellow faculty, we were a really close group

Anthony (Jr)

I had work and classes, and was really focused on completing my units for transfer, so I didn't get involved in any clubs. I did enjoy time spent with other students who hung out in the art studios.

How did attending CCC prepare you for the “real world” and your career?

What was most applicable?

Anthony (Jr)

In some ways, it didn't. I'd started CCC with a major in graphic design, but changed it to fine arts. Ironically, the job I found after getting my BA in Fine Arts was in graphic design. And graphic design had changed almost completely with the advent of computers and design programs. I had to learn these new skills on my own, and with help from some of the older workers who took me under their wing at the graphic design firm where I worked for a few years. My experience drawing by hand did come in handy, though - I was always good at designing packaging. And I did return to fine arts, earning my MFA.

Was there a college employee who had a significant positive influence on your time at CCC?

Tony (Sr)

Ray Dondero!

Anthony (Jr)

Pat Tidd was a great influence on my skills in drawing and print-making. Harry Hancock hired me to mop floors at his shop and taught me how to do my own auto repairs. Ron Moroni, my photography teacher, would give me the supplies I needed in trade for some of my art. There were lots of other helpful folks that I met through my dad's connections with them.



If you had the chance, would you choose the same program or position again?

Tony (Sr)

Yes!

Anthony (Jr)

Probably; it's hard to say since the design world has changed so much. At the same time, I have zero regrets. I learned so much, and the smaller classes here meant that faculty could give their students more attention.

What do you know now that you wish you had known during your time at CCC?

Anthony (Jr)

I probably should have gotten more people's phone numbers. There are people I'd like to have kept in touch with or reconnect.

What advice would you give someone thinking of attending/working at CCC?

Tony (Sr)

It is a wonderful place to get an education; it serves its students well.

Anthony (Jr)

Become your own advocate. There are so many faculty who would bend over backwards for their students, but you have to take the initiative. Go to office hours, build a relationship. Your teachers may be contacts for future jobs and/or write recommendations for you (which will be better if they know more about you other than having been in their class).