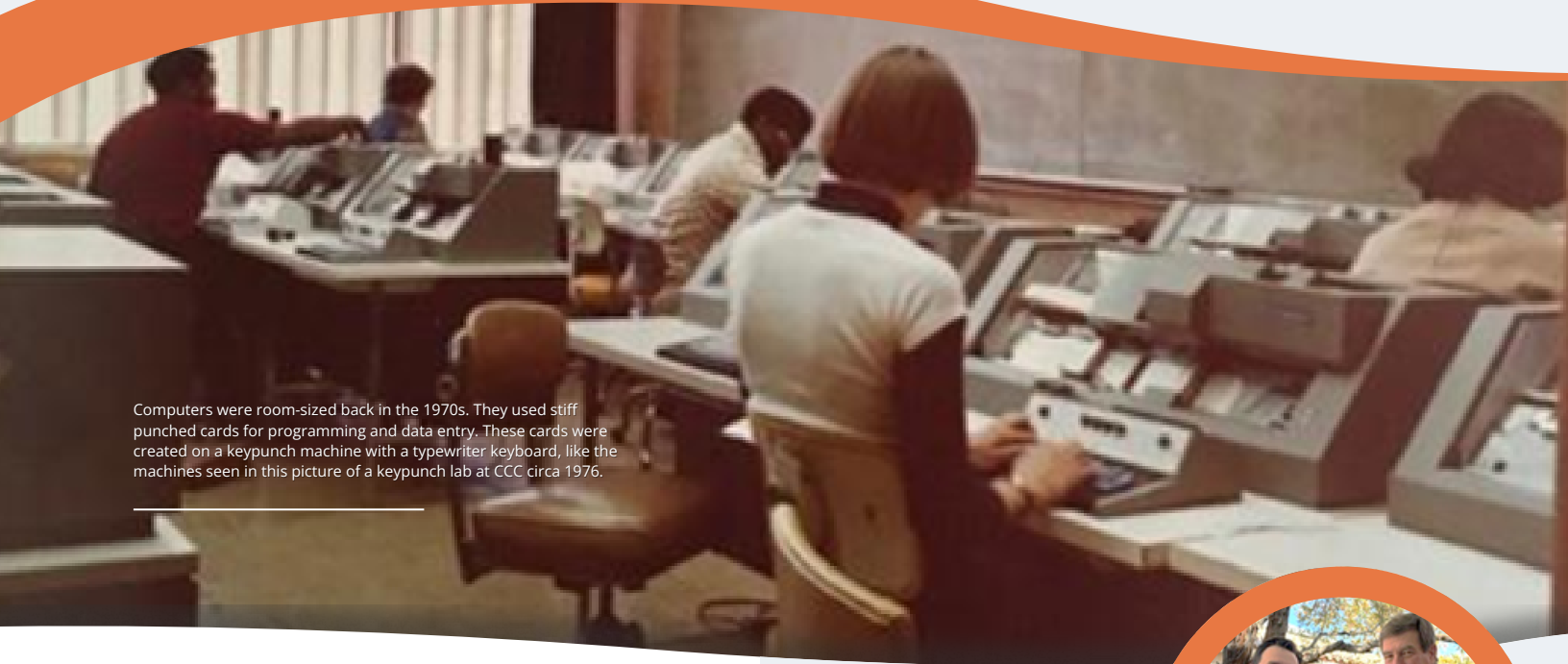




**CONTRA
COSTA
COLLEGE**

Generational Connections

Spring 2025 | Issue 02



Computers were room-sized back in the 1970s. They used stiff punched cards for programming and data entry. These cards were created on a keypunch machine with a typewriter keyboard, like the machines seen in this picture of a keypunch lab at CCC circa 1976.

75 Years of Excellence!

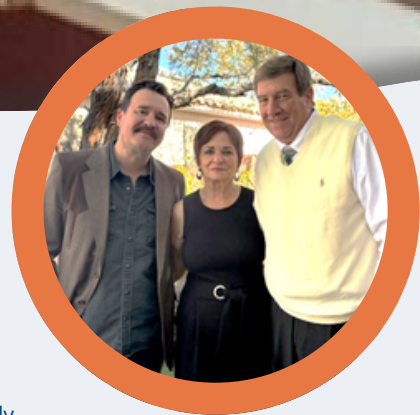
Established in 1949, we proudly began our journey with the first classes in Spring 1950. Here's to honoring our legacy and embracing the future together!

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 DeBolt Family



Joan and Paul DeBolt officially met when they were students at CCC. They were both in a First Aid class taught by Vince Maiorano. Paul was first the sports writer and then editor of the student newspaper. He returned to CCC five years after he graduated as a full-time professor. He stayed 40 years, teaching journalism and coaching women's basketball. Their son, David, also attended CCC, where he was also editor of The Advocate. David went on to an award-winning career as a reporter at several Bay Area newspapers. He is currently an editor at the East Bay Times. Unbeknownst to the college when she was hired, their new professor of journalism, Annie Sciacca, is married to David, and thus continues the family tradition.



Legacy Talks

Passing the Baton from
One Generation to the Next

Did you grow up in the local community?

Paul

Yes, in Pinole (Joan) and El Sobrante (Paul).

David

No - but I spent a lot of my childhood on campus.

What is your most positive CCC memory?

Joan

Sitting in a circle in John Kelleher's psychology class and him getting us all to talk. Also vividly recall Pasqual Anania (philosophy) sitting on the edge of his desk, smoking and talking - a lot! - about the Patty Hearst kidnapping.

Paul

Playing basketball. I loved my California geography class with Warren Dolby, and journalism with Alma Oberst. I also liked the classes I took with Vince Maiorana, Tom Kinnard, Ted Radke, Keith Buescher - all people I later worked with!

David

My favorite is hanging out in the newsroom, working collectively every week to produce the paper. People would pop in and out, so I got to know a lot about the campus. I made lifelong friends there.

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

Joan

Yes. It was local, I had friends here, and in those days, there was no tuition.

Paul

Yes. It was local, and I could play basketball.

David

Yes. I grew up on the campus. I had lots of mentors from when I'd hang out in the Advocate newsroom or at the edges of the basketball court, so it felt natural.

Paul Debolt was inducted into the Comet Athletics Hall of Fame in Fall 2025 for his contributions as head coach for the Women's Basketball.

Did you work at CCC?

Paul

Yes - 40 years!

David

Yes; I worked part-time at the Bookstore.

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

Paul

I saw Tower of Power play on campus. French president Francois Mitterand spoke. When I was working here, I heard Angela Davis speak in the amphitheater.



How satisfied were you with your experience at CCC?

Joan

I got the units I needed to transfer.

Paul

Very – I'd gone to Berkeley for a year & was tired of being tear-gassed. CCC was mellower & I enjoyed playing basketball for Ed Greene & learned a lot from Alma Oberst.

David

It was great, I learned a ton. I got to play baseball. Working on the paper forced me to meet lots of other people across the campus. I feel fortunate. My entire world was on campus between The Advocate, baseball, and my bookstore job.

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

Joan

Community colleges are good places to prepare (all 4 of our children went to a cc then transferred). They have smaller classes and better teachers. And nowadays, it also saves money.

Paul

Figure out what you need and take advantage of all the services available to you. Get involved in activities outside of the classroom - sports, drama, speech team, student government, etc. There is a lot to learn from other students; it can be amazing!

David

Get involved in campus life. Some of the best moments are learned there.

Did you graduate/earn a certificate/transfer?

Joan

I got my AA then transferred to Sacramento State.

Paul

I got my AA then transferred to San Diego State.

David

I got my AA then transferred to San Francisco State.

Was there a college employee (faculty, classified or manager) who had a significant positive influence on your time at CCC?

Joan

John Kelleher – he was kind, a good listener.

Paul

Bernard Blumberg, my public speaking teacher. He told me I didn't have a stutter, just hesitant speech and taught me better breathing techniques. It changed my life.

David

Willie McGee (former pro baseball player), who was the assistant baseball coach. I'd played a year of baseball but was thinking of stopping, because I wanted to be Advocate editor the next year and didn't think I could do both well. Coach (Marvin) Webb was upset with me, wanted me to stay. I went to talk with Coach McGee. He listened then asked what I wanted to be, a reporter or a baseball player? When I said reporter, he said then that is what you should do; I'll talk to Coach Webb. That advice got me where I am today.



What's In A Name?

Did you know our campus, mascot and newspaper have had a few name changes over the years?

The College

1950:

Contra Costa Junior College, West Campus

1951:

West Contra Costa Junior College

1958:

Contra Costa College

The Mascot

1950:

The Wolves (very unpopular, so vote was set aside)

1950:

The football team is first to be known as The Comets

The Newspaper

1950:

The Blue and Gray Newsletter

1957:

Comet's Tale

1960:

The Advocate

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

What was most applicable?

Joan

I expanded my circle friends, experienced a new environment. I gained the confidence to be on my own when I transferred. It was a great place to transition to being a grownup.

Paul

It aimed me into journalism, although teaching it was the last thing on my mind when I was a student. CCC was an awakening for me; I changed a lot. It was a wonderful community that really cared, nurtured, took the time to really know you.

David

I got some experience doing all the different tasks involved in creating a paper. Having to write multiple articles on a variety of topics built my writing muscle. We all took it seriously, really cared what we were saying.

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

Joan

Hanging out with my friends on the lawn between the Library and the Liberal Arts Building (since replaced by the Science Center).

Paul

Basketball, the golf team, The Advocate. I still have many friends from my student years.

David

Baseball; the beautiful chaos of the newsroom; great memories of working at the bookstore, even during the beginning of the semester rush. job.

What did you learn at CCC that is most applicable to your current/former position?

Paul

Face-to-face instruction is best. The Advocate lab was my favorite part as both student and teacher. I love what happens in the classroom! Teaching can change lives.

David

Ditto of above answer.

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Get involved in campus life. Some of the best moments are learned there.

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

Paul

I should have studied harder, taken some harder classes. I now know what amazing opportunities I missed to learn from some of the faculty who were there.

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

Paul

Joan

David

Absolutely!

