VCCCD RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

The Monitor

Summer 2026

Ventura County Community College District Retirees' Association

Annual General Meeting: Overview

By Sandy Hajas and Marie SooHoo



The 2026 Annual General Meeting was held on April 29, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at the Orchid Building Conference Room in Camarillo. The meeting was also made available via Zoom for those members who could not make it in person. President Susan Bricker called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Susan thanked the Social Committee for the refreshments and Sofia and Teresa from AFT for allowing the use of the conference room. Susan then informed the group that she is stepping away from her role as president but will stay involved on the board as a past president. She gave a summary of her term as president, stating it was one of the greatest accomplishments of her life. She thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve and encouraged others to consider getting involved as well. After official business, including the minutes and the treasurer's report, nominations for the offices of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer were taken. There being no nominations from the floor, the Nomination Chair, Larry Manson, with the assistance of Diane Moore, presented a list of nominations for the offices: Mary Jones, President; Marie SooHoo, Secretary; and David Magallanes, Treasurer. The position of vice-president will remain vacant due to the lack of volunteers or nominations. The candidates were voted in by the group for a two-year term. Mary Jones provided a Statement of Interest and a biography that were distributed to members for their review prior to the meeting. Mary briefly addressed attendees at the meeting, expressing her interest in the presidency, as she feels it is important to make a difference for VCCCD retirees. Marie SooHoo and David Magallanes also briefly addressed the attendees, expressing their interest in continuing to serve in their respective positions of secretary and treasurer.

Marta Freixas provided an update on current health benefits. She indicated that in addition to the review of the Evidence of Coverage documents for the current Anthem plans by Harry Culotta, Michael Bowen and herself. Jan Archibald has volunteered to assist the Benefits Committee by reviewing the Kaiser plan. Marta provided her email address to attendees so that they could contact her if they had any concerns regarding their coverage or for any issues that they may become aware of or encounter. Gary Johnson spoke briefly to attendees and commented that he hoped the current unions for the faculty and classified employees would also review the EOC booklets, and that they were aware that whatever they do will affect retirees in the future.

Susan asked Gary Johnson to give an overview of the legal issues over the past years and what the issues continue to be now. Gary commented on the first lawsuit against the District that was filed by the Association in 2007 and settled in favor of the Association in 2010. The current lawsuit, filed in 2020, is still in process. Susan provided information on the meeting that the new members of the Legal Committee (Susan Bricker, Robin Douglas, Sandy Hajas, Diane Moore, and Joan Smith) had with attorney Erica Deutsch. She stated that she was feeling more positive about where we are now and that the attorney is at the point of getting this settlement signed off soon. **(see pg.2)**

Michael Bowen, Membership Chair, provided the following updated numbers:

- Current Association members: 850
- Past Association members who are now deceased: 444

(Continued on page 2)

Annual General Meeting (Continued from page 1)

Note: According to our bylaws, "Any person, upon retirement, shall immediately become a member in good standing with all rights and privileges pertaining thereto." We appreciate those retirees who become a dues paying members supporting our association's endeavors. Become an active member today! We appreciate your support.

After a brief introduction of the VCCCDRA Board members, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.










Board Changes

By Sandy Hajas

Welcome Aboard to Mary Jones as our next board president. Mary retired from the VCCCD in 2023 as Student Heath Center Coordinator. She worked first as an independent contractor before she was hired full-time. She worked at both Oxnard and Ventura Colleges. She was also active in the Academic Senate and was a member of the Behavioral Intervention Caring Team and Safety Committee. She earned her Bachelor of Science in nursing from Salve Regina University and her Master of Science in nursing from UCLA. She also has a nurse practitioners license from Emory University. She has actively worked in the field of nursing for 53 years.

Susan Bricker will be stepping down as president; however, she has generously agreed to continue on the board in the past-president position. Susan has served as president since 2020 and has worked tirelessly, spearheading such issues as updating our website, blog, and launching a new Facebook page. She also has been leading the charge of resolving our legal settlement issues. We are thankful that she is going to stay on and continue her support on the board.

Robin Douglas has decided to step down as vice-president and, as a result, that position is currently vacant. We are seeking a volunteer to replace her. Please contact us at vcccdra@gmail.com if you are interested.

We also have a vacancy on the board for the appointed position of Scholarship Chair. We are filled with great sadness to as we announce that our former chair, Carolyn Dorrance, has passed away. Carolyn spearheaded the awarding of our Don B. Medley Scholarship for many years. She worked tirelessly with the foundation, studiously read the applications, and helped to select student awardees. She is a great loss to our organization. We are hoping that this position might interest someone among our retirees who would like to see that our computer science student scholarship award continues. Please contact us at vcccdra@gmail.com if you are interested.

It is likewise overwhelmingly sad to announce that Rene Rodriguez has also passed away. Rene served for twenty years on the VCCCDRA Board as president, past-president, and as an at-large representative. We are very grateful for the historical knowledge and experience he provided to the board throughout the years. His calm and friendly nature will be greatly missed. Joy Kobayashi has volunteered to serve as an at-large representative to replace Rene. Joy previously served on the board as membership chair, and we warmly welcome her back on board.

President's Message

By Mary Jones, VCCCDRA President



Dear Colleagues,

It is a great honor to serve as the President of the Ventura County Community College District Retiree's Association. My decision to volunteer for this positon occurred because leadership is important to me and to any organization. Since I joined the organization upon retiring in July 2023, I have attended multiple social events. It was apparent how much connecting with colleagues meant to the participants. The fact that there are so many active committees in this organization also demonstrates the level of commitment to all retirees.

I have been asked what my goals are for the future or this organization. They are as follows:

1. Continue to expand outreach to all new and old retirees and to encourage them to become active in the organization.
2. Provide brief in-service discussions at the start of the socials as well as the annual meeting that are relevant to the retiree population including: computer for seniors, tips on how to handle the isolation and loneliness which can occur after retirement or the loss of a loved one, etc. I am open to suggestions.
3. Increase visibility by meeting with District Leaders, AFT and SEIU, the Academic and Classified presidents, and the heads of the Ventura County Community Foundation.

Many of you know that VCCCDRA started out as a social organization. The purpose of the organization has expanded to include: oversight of medical benefits, scholarships for deserving students, awareness of possible issues that would affect retirees, a newsletter, blog posts, a new and improved website and more advances to come.

2026-2027 will be a year of challenges and opportunities. If you are not involved, think about it--the rewards to you are immeasurable. Bring a friend to the socials-- what an opportunity to share ideas and connect.

I look forward to next year and to working with each of you.

Mary

Scholarship Recipients

By Sandy Hajas and David Magallanes

This year's winners of the Don Medley Scholarship offered by the VCCCDRA are Maritza Martinez and Oscar Magana. The scholarship was granted to two individuals who are majoring in computer science and who the Ventura County Community Foundation and Carolyn Dorrance, our late Scholarship Chair, felt were deserving of our support.

Maritza recently graduated from Hueneme High School and will be attending Oxnard College, where she will be majoring in computer science. Maritza loves math and video gaming. She is extremely interested in learning how the games are created. She plans to major in computer science with a specialization in gaming. The scholarship will make it possible for her to begin achieving her educational goals at Oxnard College. She plans to transfer to California State University, Northridge, to earn both a BA and an MA. Maritza has deep respect for her parents and the sacrifices they have made for her. She plans to use what she learns to attain a position in the gaming industry so that she can, in turn, help care for them.

Oscar is a student at Moorpark College and plans on transferring to CSU Channel Islands or CSU Fullerton, where he will be majoring in computer science while concentrating on cybersecurity and earning his BA. Currently, however, he is planning to obtain the Moorpark College Cybersecurity Penetration Tester Certificate of Achievement to demonstrate that he is prepared to enter the penetration testing field. Oscar credits his Santa Paula High School teacher, Mr. Haas, for inspiring his interest in cybersecurity. He also credits his parents for teaching him the importance of education and the values of tenacity and perseverance. Oscar works the night shift at Walmart while he attends school. This scholarship will help reduce the need to work nights and allow him to focus more on his education.

We wish Maritza and Oscar the best and hope that this scholarship will help them to achieve their career goals.

VCCCDRA members may contribute to the scholarship fund by scanning the QR code below or clicking on the following link: https://vcccdra.org/donation-to-scholarship-fund/



VCCCD Retirees' Association 2026 Fall Social

By Marie Soo Hoo

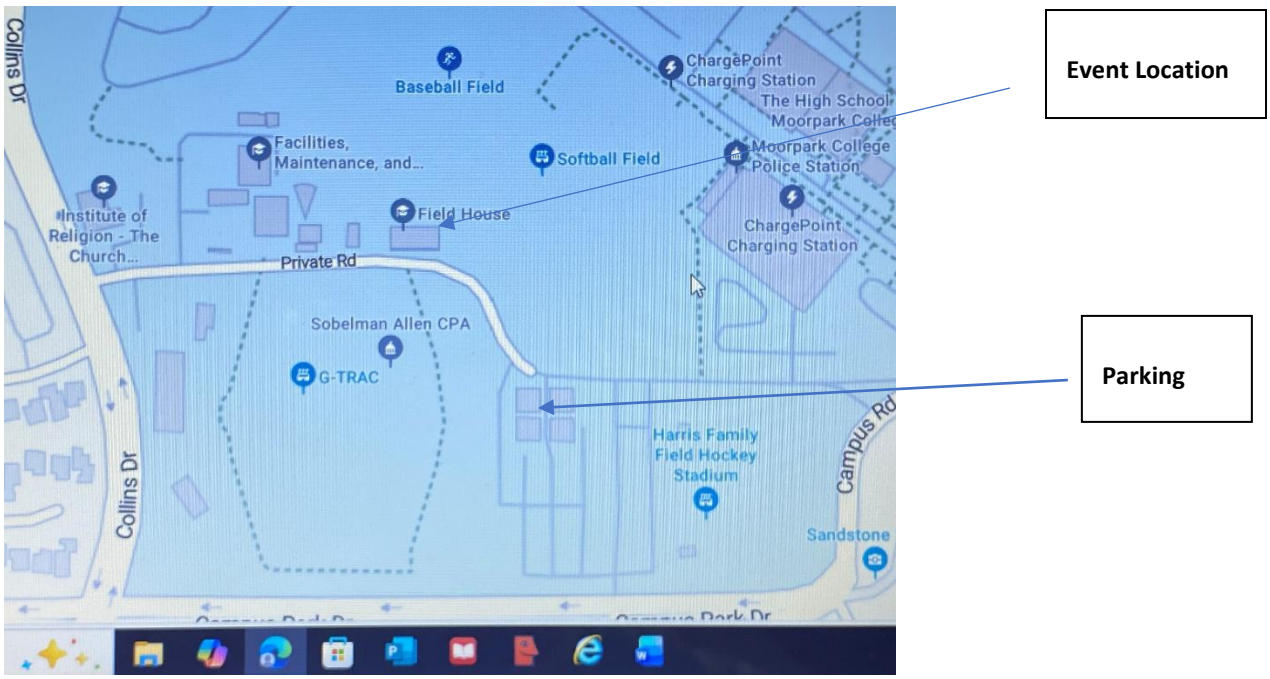
Your VCCCD Retiree's Association is planning to hold their Fall "Halloween Theme" Social Event at Moorpark College this year for the first time! We know, finally, LOL! Having received numerous requests over the years from retirees living in this area, and at the invitation of Dr. Julius Sokenu, president of Moorpark College, we have been able to make it happen. The event is planned for Thursday, October 29, 2026, in the Field House on the Moorpark College campus, near Griffin Stadium. The event will be held from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., beginning with a Social Hour/Appetizers from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., with lunch being served at 12 p.m. The event is catered by Peter Tshing (L&T Catering), a well-known truck caterer at Moorpark College, known for his excellent food and great service. The lunch will consist of Mexican food served buffet style. See the flyer announcing the event in this Newsletter for more information and reservation form to be completed and returned by the deadline date, **October 22, 2026**. Any questions, contact Marie Soo Hoo via email at masoohoo@twc.com.

Directions: 118 Fwy, exit Collins. Travel north on Collins to Campus Park Drive (electronic sign) turn right, turn left at Delfen. FLR 1 is one of the bungalows, straight ahead. Attendees should plan to park in **Parking Lot #1.** No parking permits will be required for the event. For those with mobility issues, you can be dropped off at the front of the building if you have someone to drive you up there. Also, there will also be a golfcart available to shuttle you from the parking lot.

Look for the VCCCD Retirees' Association directional signs.

CAMPUS TOURS (Available prior to start of Social Event – Beginning at 10 a.m.)

Tours of Moorpark College campus will be available for anyone who may be interested. The tours will be conducted by Deborah Klein, Director of Institutional Advancement and Community Relations, and Chief Development Officer, Moorpark College Foundation. If you would like to take a tour, please contact Kayla Garcia via email at kayla_garcia4@vcccd.edu to sign up. Transportation will be provided via golfcarts.





VCCCD RETIREES' ASSOCIATION
2026 ANNUAL FALL SOCIAL EVENT
MOORPARK COLLEGE CAMPUS

JOIN US FOR A GREAT AFTERNOON OF FOOD, CAMARADERIE, PRIZES AND FUN!!

This year your VCCCD Retirees' Association will be holding its annual Fall Social at Moorpark College. The event will be catered by Peter Tshing, a very well-known truck caterer at Moorpark College. He is known for providing excellent food and service.
The lunch will consist Mexican food served buffet style. For appetizers, we're having green beans, beef chimichanga, & potato tacos. The main course will feature beef and chicken fajitas, cheese enchiladas with toppings, rice, whole beans with corn tortillas, and a large tray of mixed fruits. Desserts and various drinks (non-alcoholic) will also be provided. In addition, since our event is being sponsored by the Moorpark College Foundation this year, we will be able to sell a variety of beer and wine.

Date: Thursday, October 29, 2026
Place: Moorpark College Campus – Field House (Near Griffin Stadium) – Park In Lot #1
Time: 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Social Hour: 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Food service: 12 p.m.
Cost: $30 per person (includes tax and tip). Please complete and submit the reservation form by the deadline date, as indicated below. RESERVATIONS REQUIRED – No walk-ins will be allowed.

The afternoon will be filled with good food and a 50/50 raffle along with prizes, camaraderie, and plenty of laughs with former colleagues and friends!! Hope to see you there**!! (If you are interested in donating items for the raffle, contact Becky Hull (bhullandus8@gmail.com) or Marie Soo Hoo (masoohoo@twc.com).**

Cut Off Here and Return Bottom Portion with Check

Reservation/Payment Form

Retiree's Name: _____ If spouse/guest attending, provide name below:
Name: _____ Circle one: Spouse Guest

Make checks payable to: VCCCD RETIREES' ASSOCIATION
$30 per person x _____ persons = $ _____ total amount of your check

Mail completed reservation form and check to: VCCCD Retirees' Association
P.O. Box 6216
Ventura, CA 93006-6216

RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCTOBER 22, 2026

Membership Report

BY Michael Bowen

Please join me in welcoming our valued colleagues to the VCCCD Retirees Association and in wishing them a long and satisfying retirement.

Callahan, Michael	VC	Mircetic, Ned	VC
Hall, Steve	OC	Porter, Robert	VC
Hernandez, Wally	VC	Turner, Steve	VC
Hott, Robert	DO		

In Memoriam

We honor the memory of our departed colleagues and extend our sincerest condolences to their families, friends, and associates. Memorials are posted at: https://vcccdra.org/,

Tom Bertolino	VC	Norma Letinsky	MC
Donald Bowen	MC	Jim Merrill	OC
John Davie	MC	Joyce Parkel	OC
Carolyn Dorrance	OC	Lavar Rigby	VC
Marjorie Hawkins	VC	Rene Rodriquez	VC/MC/OC/DO
Terry Holts (adjunct)	VC	Patricia Rush	VC
Huddleston, Gwendolyn Lewis	VC	Constance Tveit	VC
Lawson, Robert	VC	Charlotte K. Udd	VC

REMINDER! ALL ANNUAL PAYING MEMBERS ARE BEHIND IN THE DUES!



Please send your payment today!

VCCCD Retirees' Association
P.O. Box 6216
Ventura, CA 93006-6216

Alternatively, you may submit your payment online at: https://vcccdra.org/dues-and-donations/

Support your retiree association, pay your dues: Annual dues: $**25.00**

(Note: If you have paid the lifetime membership rate of $250.00, your dues are paid.)

EMAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED: If you are receiving this issue of the newsletter through the U.S. mail and have an email, please contact the VCCCDRA at **vcccdra@gmail.com** so that we have updated information. Thank you.

VCCCD Retirees' Association
P.O. Box 6216
Ventura, CA 93006-6216

Place Postage Here

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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Summer 2026

Ventura County Community College District Retirees' Association

2026-2027 Executive Board

Mary Jones, President	vcccdra@gmail.com
Susan Bricker, Immediate Past President	nakoa56@yahoo.com
Vacant, Vice President	
Marie Soo Hoo, Secretary	masoohoo@twc.com
David Magallanes, Treasurer	vcccdratreasurer@gmail.com
Harry R. Culotta, Benefits Committee Chair	hculotta@fastmail.com
Michael Bowen, Membership Committee Chair	fizzbowen@gmail.com
Larry Manson, Educational Issues Committee Chair	lmanson@west.net
Vacant, Scholarship Committee Chair	
Carmen Guerrero, Technology Committee Chair	cguerr49@gmail.com
Sandy Hajas, Newsletter	sandy.hajas@gmail.com
Marta Freixas, At-Large Representative	mfreixas@realmailme.com
Joy Kobayashi, At-Large Representative	tandemstoker@roadrunner.com
Joan Smith, At Large Representative	ccpresident@hotmail.com