

LOCAL NEWS

College of Marin honors 3 with new awards



The new student center at the College of Marin in Kentfield, Calif., on Monday, Feb. 2, 2026. (Alan Dep/Marin Independent Journal)



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An educator, a nonprofit leader and a philanthropic graduate were honored with the College of Marin's first Impact Awards. ✕

The college honored the recipients during its 100th anniversary gala on Saturday. The honorees are Walter Turner, a social sciences professor; Kim Mazzuca, president and chief executive of 10,000 Degrees; and Louis Bershad, who graduated from the college in 1960.

Jonathan Eldridge, the college president, said they "represent the very best of what is possible when education, community and commitment come together."

Turner, who received the Employee Impact Award, has taught at the College of Marin for more than 50 years. A Marin City native whose family was among the community's early settlers, Turner has dedicated his career to the histories and experiences of African and African American communities.

"You've got people who are coming back to school, people who are retraining for a career," Turner said. "To know that you have something to offer is the greatest feeling in the world."

Turner led the development of ethnic studies at San Francisco State University before joining the College of Marin social sciences faculty, where he has chaired the department and led global delegations to Africa and Cuba.

He co-founded the college's Umoja Learning Community, which supports students of color in navigating higher education, and continues to serve as a faculty leader in the Umoja Equity Institute.

Mazzuca, who received the Community Impact Award, has led 10,000 Degrees since 1999. The education nonprofit has grown from serving 400 students in Marin to reaching more than 16,000 students and families annually in eight Bay Area counties and Utah, according to Mazzuca.

Mazzuca, who was a first-generation college student, reoriented 10,000 Degrees to exclusively serve students from low-income backgrounds. Today, 93% of its students are from communities of color and 92% are first-generation college students, according to Mazzuca. More than 80% of four-year college program participants earn their bachelor's degrees.

At the College of Marin, the nonprofit embeds trained mentors who are recent college graduates to provide academic support, financial aid counseling and coaching.

In 2013, the organization launched the Summer Bridge program at the college. It has helped hundreds of incoming students build skills and confidence to succeed in college, according to Mazzuca.

Bershad, the founder of SDB Partners Inc., a talent agency in the Beverly Hills area, received the Alumni Impact Award. Bershad and his wife Ro established scholarships in business and drama to honor the professors who believed in him when he was a student at the College of Marin. They also have set up a nursing scholarship at the college.

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This year, the couple made a \$1 million gift to the college's Centennial Endowment Campaign.

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