



**Office of the Superintendent/President,  
Santa Monica College**  
*Kathryn E. Jeffery, Ph.D.*

June 7, 2023

Dear SMC Colleagues:

Ten years ago today, the Santa Monica College community suffered a devastating tragedy when long-time SMC groundskeeper Carlos Franco, his daughter Marcela, and Margarita Gomez, a neighbor of the college, lost their lives to an act of gun violence. This senseless loss of life has stayed with us over the years. We continue to mourn the loss of these beloved members of our community.

Carlos was known to be a family man, a dedicated husband and father, and an essential member of the SMC family who took great pride in making the college campus a welcoming place for colleagues and students alike. Marcela was a student at Cal State Dominguez Hills and had recently decided to take summer courses at SMC to attain credits towards her goal of a clinical psychology degree. Neighbor Margarita Gomez was a familiar figure on campus, visiting frequently to collect recyclable items. Those who interacted with her at the college remember her as “someone who was always happy.”

As I acknowledge the ten-year anniversary of this tragedy, the heroism and bravery of now-retired SMC Police Captain Ray Bottenfield, and Santa Monica Police Department Officers Jason Salas and Robert Sparks, must once again be recognized. For their courageous actions on June 7, 2013, placing themselves in mortal danger to respond in time and save lives, Bottenfield, Salas, and Sparks received the National Medal of Valor from President Barack Obama and, among other such other honors, also were awarded the Peace Officer Valor Award from then California Attorney General Kamala Harris. These officers—as well as the other members of the SMC Police Department on duty that day, and the SMC library staff members who utilized prior emergency preparedness training to help save lives—are *true* heroes whose bravery can never be emphasized enough.

Carlos, Marcela, and Margarita were taken from this world too soon; they left a void that cannot be filled. My deepest condolences go out to their families and loved ones—members of Carlos and Marcela’s family are also here with us, colleagues at SMC—and I pray their memories will continue to provide some solace. We honor their extraordinary lives and the legacy of love and service they left behind, on this day, and all the days to come.

Kathryn E. Jeffery, Ph.D.  
Superintendent/President