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**North-West College Founder Marsha Fuerst Dies at 79**

*Committed Advocate for Quality Education Leaves Legacy of Success*

WEST COVINA, Calif.—On February 23, 2016, the world lost a pioneer in education. Marsha Fuerst, 79, founder of North-West College (NWC), a system of allied health colleges, died in Southern California early Tuesday morning. A tireless advocate for quality career training, Marsha served as President of North-West College for more than four decades—impacting thousands of students' lives by equipping them to enter and advance in the health care field.

When North-West College first opened its doors in 1966, its future looked uncertain. Marsha Fuerst inherited the property from her mother, Anne Kalsman, who had just purchased the land and begun construction on the school when she died of a heart attack at the age of 53. Marsha was left with a partially completed building and nearly \$155,000 in debt.

Though she had long dreamed of becoming a medical missionary, Marsha caught her mother's vision for the College and set out to make it a reality. In a 1980 interview with McCall's Magazine she shared, "I was so determined to make this thing work, that I didn't stop to ask myself—is this realistic. I just always thought I could do it."

North-West College opened with two classes and 43 students—all of whom were women. Combining a women-centric school with a health care curriculum marked a radical shift in education in Southern California at the time.

As North-West College grew and impacted the lives of hundreds of women, Marsha's vision also grew to include all under-privileged individuals. As long as they had the drive to empower themselves through education, students were accepted and instantly became part of the College's family.

By 1976, North-West College had grown to more than 1,000 students at two campuses, the original West Covina location along with a new campus in Pomona. As she learned about needs in her community, Marsha developed programs to meet those needs, including a new respiratory therapy program and a veterinary assistant program—which was the first of its kind in the nation.

As North-West College continued to flourish, Marsha remained committed to upholding the quality of education offered at NWC, refusing to sacrifice the caliber of training for faster growth. Her dedication resulted in full accreditation for the West Covina and Pomona campuses.

On October 28, 1976, Congressman Jim Lloyd presented Marsha Fuerst with a certificate of achievement on behalf of the U.S. House of Representatives for her contributions to the state of California. Her ongoing advocacy for quality vocational education also landed Marsha roles as spokesperson for the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools and President of the California Association of



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Private Postsecondary Schools, making her the first woman elected to that post in the organization's history.

Born in Chicago, Ill. in 1936, Marsha credits her challenging childhood for instilling in her a drive for success. The daughter of a single mom, she grew up in a home where it was sometimes difficult to make ends meet.

In a 1981 interview with the Tribune, Marsha explained that her home life as a child made her cherish close family relationships. Although she had many demands on her time, Marsha Fuerst was fiercely committed to her role as a wife and mother to her four children.

"I can remember as a young man, my Mom coming home from the College in a suit and heels and directing one of us to run off and get her an apron so she could prepare dinner," Mitchell Fuerst, Marsha's youngest son, shared. "There we stood, in the kitchen, watching my Mom prepare our family's dinner in her business attire."

In addition to caring for her family, Marsha managed to continue to grow and expand North-West College, adding a Pasadena campus in 1980, and a Glendale campus in 1982. In 2004, NWC launched a campus in Riverside as well, adding many programs previously unavailable to its students.

Forty-four years after welcoming its first students, Marsha Fuerst retired in 2010, passing the torch to her son, Mitchell Fuerst, who became the next President of North-West College.

Under Mitchell's leadership, North-West College has grown to be part of a system of allied health schools known as Success Education Colleges (SEC), which includes Glendale Career College (GCC) and Nevada Career Institute (NCI). This nine-campus system spans two states and serves thousands of students as they train for careers in the health care field.

Today, Marsha Fuerst's legacy lives on. It lives in the hearts of her family and friends, in the hearts of the staff and instructors she worked with at North-West College, and in the hearts of the more than 45,000 students who have come through its doors since 1966.

### **About Success Education Colleges**

A leader in allied health education, Success Education Colleges (SEC) has been committed to training individuals to enter and advance in the health care field for 50 years. SEC is a system of nine postsecondary colleges and includes North-West College (7 campuses), Glendale Career College, and Nevada Career Institute. Accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) and approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), Success Education Colleges offers a supportive educational environment for those ready to start a health care career. To date, SEC has graduated more than 45,000 students—individuals who have gone on to raise the standard of excellence at health care organizations of all types.

For more information about Success Education Colleges, please visit [www.success.edu](http://www.success.edu).

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