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News Release

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Cerritos College Alumnus Leaves \$2.3M Estate Gift for Woodworking Scholarships

Largest financial gift in campus' history

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NORWALK, Calif. – October 14, 2019 – The Cerritos College Foundation announced today Cerritos College alumnus, the late John B. Smith, Jr., left a \$2.3 million gift from his estate to support the College's acclaimed woodworking program. Mr. Smith designated the multimillion-dollar gift for woodworking scholarships. It is the largest financial donation the College has received.

"We are truly humbled and inspired by Mr. Smith and his family's generosity," said Dr. Jose Fierro, president/superintendent, Cerritos College. "Mr. Smith's gift will help students attain advanced skills in woodworking and master the artistry of woodcrafts for many years to come."

Mr. Smith established a trust to create a woodworking scholarship fund at Cerritos College following his and his mother's death. Mr. Smith was born in Wichita Falls, Texas, and graduated from North High School in Torrance, California in 1962. He worked as an engineering draftsman in the aerospace industry for ten years. He took woodworking courses at Cerritos College before moving to Paso Robles, California, where he lived at the time of his passing. He also donated his woodworking equipment, including a drill press and bandsaw, to the College.

The Foundation will establish the John B. Smith Scholarship Fund to benefit students enrolled in woodworking courses at Cerritos College. Scholarships will be available starting later this year.

Cerritos College has offered woodworking courses for more than four decades. The program emphasizes hands-on training and real-world experience. All classes are project-focused. The College offers more than 40 classes, including faceframe and frameless cabinet construction, CNC woodworking, architectural millwork, table and casegood construction, hand tools, woodturning, and veneering.

"Woodworking can be a very rewarding career for students who are just graduating from high school or people looking to develop a highly skilled hobby," said Reuben Foat, Cerritos College woodworking program chair. "The job market for woodworking is very strong with careers that range from cabinet makers, furniture finishers, machine operators, and craft woodworking artists. Students who complete the program generally are incredibly satisfied working within this meaningful and gratifying vocation."

About Cerritos College: Cerritos College serves as a comprehensive community college for southeastern Los Angeles County. Communities within the college's district include Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, Norwalk, and portions of Bell Gardens, Lakewood, Long Beach, Santa Fe Springs and South Gate. Cerritos College offers degrees and certificates in more than 180 areas of study in nine divisions. Annually, more than 1,200 students successfully complete their course of studies, and enrollment currently averages 23,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at <http://www.cerritos.edu/>.

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