



Greetings, Cougar History Fans....with May 14 fast approaching, last week we took a look back at SMCC's FIRST commencement, which featured three graduates. This week, we look at the college's SECOND graduation, which saw that number climb to 13. Check out this great feature from the old *Phoenix Gazette* from May 1982 for a few of their stories....

Tell Us

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Divergent students to graduate

By Larry Samson
The Phoenix Gazette

The only common characteristic of members of South Mountain Community College's second graduating class is their school.

The 13 graduates are working mothers, recent high-school graduates, veterans, blacks, Caucasians and Hispanics.

They will be participating in the school's first on-campus commencement program Thursday. Last year the college operated out of satellite sites and held its graduation exercise — for three students — at the South Phoenix Adult Center.

This year's program begins at 7:30 p.m. in gymnasium on the 7050 S. 24th St. campus.



Hawkins



Lopez



James



Davis

The Class of '82 valedictorian, Audrey James, admits she was "shocked" when she learned of her honor. A "C student" in her native England, the 44-year-old mother said she was "so glad to get out of school over there."

She credits her acquired maturity, the support of her children and encouragement from the school for her success.

"I've had to set the example" for my two natural and three foster children, said Mrs. James. Two of her children, she noted with pride, have since gotten on their school's honor roll.

The "more helpful" American system of education also kept her encouraged — especially when she'd look around at the campus' younger students and wonder, "What am I doing here?"

The SMCC faculty and staff helped a lot, she said. "They make you feel like you can do it."

Mrs. James said she decided to return to school to pursue a career in social work. She had planned to get a degree in the field at ASU, but now plans to "work from the inside up."

One of the students who has attended SMCC "since it was a church," Mrs. James is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa honorary club and worked the past year as a teacher's aide in the math/science department.

By contrast, graduate-to-be Laurie Ann Davis, 19, hadn't even considered college until her 1980 graduation from Trevor Browne High School. The special-education major said she learned of the school through the friend of a former boyfriend and decided to enroll because it sounded interesting.

Picking up an associate in arts degree Thursday, she plans to continue her special-education studies at NAU and "maybe" get a master's degree.

Other than three credits at Phoenix College, Ms. Davis completed all her college studies at SMCC. She was a cheerleader for the basketball team this

year and worked as a receptionist/clerk in the counseling department.

Impending graduate Evelyn Lynn Hawkins, 35, is the single parent of three children and holds down a full-time job at Western Electric.

A 1963 graduate of South Mountain High School, she hopes to follow up her SMCC degree with a computer-science degree and business-administration minor at ASU. It's part of her goal to get a management position with her current employer.

"I've always wanted more," Mrs. Hawkins said. After high school, she attended business school to get a better job to save money for college. She attended Maricopa Technical College for several years before coming to SMCC when it opened last year.

Though the combination of full-time employment, family responsibilities and homework has been a burden, it was "very much" worth it, she said. "If you want it, you can do it."

Her children, she said, have enjoyed watching her progress through school and one daughter — who graduates from East High next month — hopes to be studying with her at ASU.

The SMCC experience has helped reinforce her children's regard for education, Mrs. Hawkins said. They've seen "how I struggled and how I enjoyed it."

Raymundo P. Lopez, 28, plans to use his SMCC degree to help finance his education at ASU. But he also has a higher objective.

"I want to be a role model for my kids," said Lopez, the father of five children ages 15 months to 11 years. He would like his children to have the opportunity to become doctors or lawyers, he said.

Receiving an associate in general studies degree this year, he hopes to get an applied-science degree

in computer operations and an associate of arts degree in social work or education in the next two regular semesters at SMCC.

He hopes to get a job as a computer operator after his degree to fund his studies in business or physical education at ASU.

An Air Force veteran, Lopez currently works 24 hours a week at a South Phoenix 7-Eleven and 15 hours in the school's physical education department to finance his studies. That leaves "not too much" free time, he said, but he still gets in a racquetball match three times a week, does some weight lifting and remains active in his church.

The college's other graduates are Dorothy Ealim and Jean Burnett Parks, general-studies degrees; Helen Aughtry, Lisa A. Callahan, Juanita Reyes, Diana Cynthia Sandoval, Larry Williams, Leslie Albert Williams and Paul Emmett Williams, associate-in-arts degrees.

"Commencement Reminiscences" will be the topic of the commencement address to be given by Dr. Alfredo de los Santos, Maricopa Community Colleges vice chancellor for educational development.

In addition to the presentation of degrees, the program will honor several of the school's outstanding students.

SMCC's 21 scholarship winners will be recognized along with the 30 students who placed on the President's List for academic achievement. Another 25 students will be presented Silver and Blue Service Awards.

The newly created Raúl Cárdenas Student Leadership Award will be presented to two students and another two students will receive the new Cougar Student Employee Award.

Music will be provided by the SMCC choir.