



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Santa Ana College Foundation Announces Memorial Scholarship For Former Academic Scholar**

**\*\* Brown University Student Killed by Drunk Driver  
Honored With Matching Scholarship \*\***

**Santa Ana, CA** – Martin Luther King, Jr. was once quoted as saying, “The quality, not the longevity, of one's life is what is important.” This quote was true for King whose ministry of peace inspired a generation and forever changed this nation. And, this quote is equally true for [Santa Ana College \(SAC\)](#) alumnus Tam Tran, who at age 27, was killed tragically by a drunk driver in a car accident in Maine on May 14. Tran, who attended Santa Ana College (SAC) from 2001 to 2003, was both an academic scholar and campus leader with a passion for helping students who faced great obstacles to achieving their academic goals. To memorialize Tran and her exceptional academic achievements, leadership, and community activism, the SAC Foundation will announce the creation of a \$2,500 matching scholarship in her honor - the Tam Tran Memorial Scholarship. The announcement of the memorial scholarship will be made at a tribute to Tran to be held on campus on **Wednesday, May 26, at 2:30 p.m. at Johnson Center, room U 103**. The college is located at 1530 W. 17<sup>th</sup> St. in Santa Ana. The formal service will be preceded by a cultural celebration that will take place from 1:30-2:30 p.m. in the same location.

“Tam Tran’s story mirrors that of many of our graduates,” explained Erlinda J. Martinez, Ed.D., SAC. “Students come to SAC for an education and, in the process, discover their hidden gifts and talents. SAC provided a life-altering experience for Tam. SAC was not only where she identified her academic focus and career passion but her experiences on campus as a student leader also provided her with insight, shaping her personal vision. She discovered her compassion for disadvantaged students and began her quest to help them,” explained Dr. Martinez.

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As president of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society at SAC, Tran blossomed into a leader. She was instrumental in motivating students to become actively involved in student affairs and broader community issues, and became passionate about removing the barriers within the higher education system for undocumented students. After graduating from SAC with an associate degree, Tran transferred to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where she earned a bachelor's degree. She was accepted into a master's/doctorate program at Brown University, where she was majoring in American Civilization at the time of her death.

“While the matching of donor funds for a scholarship is rare for the Foundation, this one seemed warranted given this young woman's achievements both in the classroom and as a model citizen,” explained Tony Ellis, SAC Foundation president. “We want our students to draw inspiration from alumni like Tran. After all, she held herself to the highest academic standard, graduating from one of the nation's top flight public universities and was pursuing a doctorate degree, as an honor student, at an Ivy League campus. This young woman was not only committed to academic excellence but she also was committed to using her gifts and talents to better her corner of the world. We want all our students to be like Tam Tran – people who make a difference in our local community and in our nation,” said Ellis.

The scholarship will be awarded to a student who is academically excellent, has financial need, and—like Tam—is traveling towards establishing her American citizenship. A number of the Foundation's existing scholarships, including the Opportunity Scholarship, have been funded by private donations from benevolent anonymous donors who want to support students who demonstrate academic promise and high motivation but lack financial resources or access to traditional financial aid options.

Donations to the Tam Tran Memorial Scholarship can be made online at [www.sac.edu/foundation](http://www.sac.edu/foundation) or by calling 714-564-6091. All donations are tax deductible. The Foundation's tax ID number is 95-6209198.

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For the past 40 years, the SAC Foundation has been dedicated to developing programs and services that create countless learning opportunities, save thousands of dollars for students and raise resources critical to the success of the entire college. The Foundation is committed to ensuring that no student is denied educational opportunities due the lack of financial resources. In 2009, the SAC Foundation awarded \$580,000 in scholarships, program funding and faculty and departmental support. For more information about the Foundation, visit [www.sac.edu/foundation](http://www.sac.edu/foundation) or call 714-564-6091.

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