



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Chancellor Brice W. Harris Statement on the Death of Former California Community Colleges Chancellor David Mertes

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Chancellor Brice W. Harris issued the following statement today on the passing of former Chancellor David Mertes, 83, who died yesterday:

“I extend my deepest condolences to Chancellor Mertes’ family during this difficult time. He led the California Community Colleges for eight years, and oversaw a massive influx of students into the system. He was a talented and prescient administrator who foresaw the need to introduce technology into the community colleges to meet the demands of a growing population. The system he left to his successors was immeasurably stronger thanks to his leadership and vision.”

Mertes served as state chancellor from 1988 to 1996. Before overseeing the then-106 colleges of the system, he led the Los Rios Community College District based in Sacramento. He ran the Santa Barbara Community College District from 1978 to 1981 and was president of the College of San Mateo from 1968 to 1978. Mertes earned a doctorate in biochemical embryology from UC Berkeley in 1966 and worked for the American Cancer Society as a research fellow before moving into college administration.

The [California Community Colleges](http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/) is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>.

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