



## News Release

Contact: Jill Ivie  
(805) 546-3108  
FAX (805) 546-3921

Cuesta College Institutional Advancement/  
Marketing & Communications  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-8106  
Email: [jill\\_ivie@cuesta.edu](mailto:jill_ivie@cuesta.edu)

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# Cuesta College Announces Honored Alumni of 2008

Cuesta College has announced its 2008 Honored Alumni, naming Dr. Elaine Cormier and Sjanya de Groot as the honored recipients.

Cuesta College has been awarding its Honored Alumni for 19 years, recognizing former students that have made outstanding achievements, served the community and/or served Cuesta College.



Dr. Elaine Cormier is an optometrist with offices in San Luis Obispo and Atascadero. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in social sciences from UC Santa Barbara, Associate in Nursing degree from Cuesta College, and Bachelor of Visual Sciences and Doctor of Optometry degree from Southern California College of Optometry, graduating Magna Cum Laude. She worked as a registered nurse with an emphasis on Coronary Observation Units at French Hospital for four years before completing her education and opening her practices in San Luis Obispo County in 1988.

“Cuesta College offered me the foundation of my professional career,” Cormier said. “The many dedicated instructors in the science department and nursing program provided top quality education with a caring attitude for the students. My time at Cuesta was central to my introduction to the community and provided the beginning of many long-term friendships.”

Cormier is a past president and board member of the Tri-County Optometric Society, a member of the Rotary San Luis Obispo de Tolosa Club, member of the Quota Club of San Luis Obispo and former Quotarian of the Year, charter member and volunteer of the SLO Botanical Garden Society and chair of the Cuesta College Alumni Legacy Project.

“I am thankful for the doors that Cuesta College opened for me and proud of the services the college provides this community,” Cormier said.



Sjanya de Groot is owner and manager of de Groots Nursing Home for Medically Fragile Children. Since 1976, she has been caring for medically fragile infants and children from her home, providing them with round-the-clock care.

She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Mental and Nervous Disorders/Psychiatric Nursing in Holland and her Associate Degree in Nursing from Cuesta College.

“Because my Holland degree was not recognized in the 1970s, I needed more nursing training,” de Groot said. “I enrolled in Cuesta College for the two year program. The program was very new. Cuesta College offered me the opportunity to work full time at night with five children. It was not easy but it did prepare me for the difficult work we have done for the past 32 years caring for medically fragile children.”

de Groot has been honored with several awards for her work since she began, including Woman of the Year from the Coast District Business and Professional Women, a Presidential Citation from President Reagan, a Woman of Distinction Award from Cuesta College, California Legislature Woman of the Year Award and the Lt. Governor John Garamendi Women of the Year Award. She is also the author of “I Will Never Give Up: A memoir of a woman with a mission.”

She has been married to her husband for 57 years and has seven children and 14 grandchildren.

The recipients will be honored at a luncheon on Friday, May 2 from 12 to 2 p.m. in room 5401. For more information, contact 546-3915.

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