



**Umoja Community of California Community Colleges  
Tribute to Vice Chancellor Linda Michalowski  
November 21, 2014**



## Introduction

I am here to explain why we have chosen sand as a way to honor Linda Michalowski for her service. Do you know how sand is formed? Sand is loose grains of worn out and disintegrated rock, shells and corals. It takes years and years for sand to form when the process is done naturally. So sand has longevity.

Sand also has many uses. When mixed with soil, sand allows water to flow through it quickly which means it can be life giving to plants that have roots that are deep in the soil and in need of water. Sand is used in mortar to make bricks. It helps prevent shrinkage and cracking while the brick dries so therefore, it acts as a stabilizer. Sand is also a major component of concrete. Sand is what makes concrete strong and everlasting.

So why is all of this symbolic of Linda Michalowski?

- 1) Like sand, Linda has longevity in her career. She has worked for the State Chancellor's Office for many years.
- 2) Like the sand mixed with water, Linda has been life giving to the Umoja Community; she has always been a supporter of what we stood for and more than that, she has a heartfelt belief in what we stand for.
- 3) Like the sand mixed with mortar to help stabilize the brick to keep it from shrinking and cracking, Linda helped us stay the course and not give up hope even when education budgets were slashed during the recession—she was our stabilizer—she helped us keep our hope.
- 4) And like the sand in concrete, Linda is the major person in the State Chancellor's Office that has helped Umoja to stay strong and everlasting.

So now we are going to ceremoniously pay tribute to you Linda by using a different color of sand to represent each letter in our name, Umoja, and say a little bit more about your character and the person you have been to us. This is going to involve a little audience participation and the assistance of some of the other members of the Umoja Governing Board. After each board member comes up and says a little bit more about your character, I need the audience to also repeat in unison the words "we honor you for your service."

*Judy Mays,  
American River College*

# U

The letter I received for Linda is U, and my word for her is **Ubiquitous**, which means present everywhere across time and space. This “everywhere presence” is so true for Linda. I mean what other Vice-Chancellor in the country do you know that is willing to be on the phone with faculty on Sundays and after 10pm at night. Linda has been there for us since we first made ourselves known to the Chancellor’s Office. She helped us in so many ways over these last ten years.

Linda helped us strategize. She helped us prepare our presentations. She introduced us to new chancellors as they came aboard. She helped us get through a Budget Change Proposal. She talked shop with us about our programming and our future. And most importantly, Linda never once discouraged us or left us feeling unsure about ourselves and our future. This quality of being both practical and visionary has meant so much to us, because no matter where we were at with our organization, with our evolution, no matter what struggles and no matter how far we were pushing ourselves out there to make this happen for Black students, we always knew Linda had our back. We can’t even describe how much this has meant to us these past many years. Linda’s support has truly been ubiquitous for Umoja.

Linda’s legacy will carry on, across time and space, for Black students in California. We are proud to honor her and celebrate her today in front of so many students, faculty and administrators. And we will remember Linda in 5, 10,20 years from now as we see Umoja’s impact grow and we see African American students achieve; we will remember and talk about Linda Michalowski’s profound contribution. Thank you so much Linda for being everywhere, all the time. And thank you so much for being unwavering in your support of Umoja.

*Tom deWit*  
*Chabot College*

**We honor you for your service.**

# M

Before Starting I would like for the audience to look at the picture on the screens and respond to the picture based upon what I am going to share to share about Linda in a moment.



**With Respect and warmest regards as you continue your journey...  
I honor your service. donna colondres ☺**

Linda,

I have the letter "M" and I choose as the word **Magnanimous** to describe your character Linda. It's a huge and powerful word. By the way it also has 11 characters as does your last name Linda. Magnanimous! That's your spirit Linda. Huge...

***Magna (summarized from the Merriam –Webster dictionary) in its Latin roots is described as "great" and animus described in its Latin roots as "greatly generous" and being of great mind and heart.\_***

Linda, you have a great-generous – noble spirit. I remember how you sat between the three of us at our first meeting with the Board of Governors in Sacramento and you courageously spoke out on behalf of Umoja. As we addressed the BOG you joined us in solidarity as we shared about Umoja. We made them cry. Do you remember that Linda?

Another word that comes to mind when I think about Linda is authenticity. Linda is always the same. If it's a phone call or I see her someplace -it's always that same smile and jovial voice ...Hi Donna!

There's so much to say about Linda's character and I wanted to say something really special about her. "My mother always said. " if you want to know a person's true character look at what they are doing when they think no one is looking." So, I looked Linda up on Facebook and what did I find? Beautiful pictures of her and her family, those pictures depicted her beautiful personality and the peacefulness of her soft furry cats. You like cat's Linda? I continued my search through her Facebook pictures and then... I found this picture and it said it all. In the midst of those she loved and cherished was this picture. It said it all.

*Donna Colondres  
Chaffey College*

**We honor you for your service.**

# O

My UMOJA Recognition of Linda Michalowski;

Linda Michalowski came to EOPS in 1983. I have come to know her as an “OG” advocate for the historically under-represented students. (***Black and Brown***)

EOPS began in 1969, and the people in the Chancellor’s office that fought to maintain and support special programs became warriors in the effort to correct the injustice brought about through slavery and racism. These individuals I respectfully call OG’s. Linda has focused on the question, “Am I doing all that I can with the influence that I have to ensure the success of African American students and others”?

Linda has spent countless hours fighting battles and putting out fires and working on legislation and policy’s to ensure the success of historically underrepresented students.

This work has laid the foundation upon which UMOJA was created. In other words we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. To be called an OG is a badge of honor and sign of respect.

*Clyde Phillips*  
*Orange Coast College*

We honor you for your service.

# J

My letter was " J" for **Justice**. The definition of justice according to the "American Heritage Dictionary" is moral rightness, equity, honor and fairness.

These words exemplify you Linda. You have always been the voice and the fighter for all students especially the underserved students with the students with the greatest needs. Your career has demonstrated your spirit of equity, honor and fairness and for that you are appreciated beyond words.

Your legacy as part of the HBCU Transfer Project is far reaching and will positively impact the degree attainment for students now and for generations to come.

Linda you are truly a great treasure and you will be greatly missed but not forgotten.

*E. Elaine Moore*  
*El Camino College*

We honor you for your service.

# A

Hello Linda,

My letter is A for **Adamant**.

You have an unshakable spirit for helping students to succeed. You have always been determined to set the appropriate policies so that students have the necessary foundation to accomplish their goals. You are uncompromising in your fight for justice and equity for all students in the system and you will not let anyone deter you from doing your best when it means that all students will have the opportunity to succeed.

During your many years at the Chancellor's office I know you have had to be unyielding when pressures from the legislature or other outside forces have tried to break your spirit with massive budget cuts and inflexible regulations but you remained steadfast and firm as you navigated through all the ups and downs the system brought to your door. Students from all across the state are better off because you were the kind and compassionate leader that truly cared about our students. Thank you for not giving up the good fight and helping the Umoja Community rise to the level of recognition so that we can now say that students of color do matter. You have been a friend to us and we will never forget you.

*Teresa W. Aldredge*  
*Cosumnes River College*

We honor you for your service.