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Del Mar College Foundation announces two new scholarships honoring retiring Executive Vice President and COO Lenora Keas during recent Board of Regents meeting

Gifted scholarships will keep DMC administrator's legacy moving forward as resources for students pursuing their dreams locally and in Rockport area; Board also presented Keas' favorite pelican painting that used to hang in Rockport's City Hall

She has served in many roles during her 43-year career at Del Mar College (DMC). The list is long and includes such titles as Professor, Department Chair, Executive Director, Interim Provost and more; and currently, Lenora Keas serves as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

College officials [announced Keas' retirement](#) in September, which will be Jan. 31. During last week's Board of Regents regular monthly meeting on Dec. 9, regents held a special recognition for Keas to honor her years of service and impact on the lives of students, fellow employees and the business and general communities across South Texas' Coastal Bend region.

See the entire recognition by visiting the [YouTube video posting](#).

Of Keas, Board Chair Carol A. Scott read, "Her contributions to the college cannot be overstated, and her vision and dedication have left an indelible mark on Del Mar College and the Coastal Bend. The Board of Regents wishes Lenora all the best in her next chapter and with deep gratitude for your years of service to Del Mar College and the students of South Texas."

Regents then took turns acknowledging working with Keas as and sharing parting words, along with DMC President and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Mark Escamilla.

"Your years of service here are incomparable in so many ways. There is no replacing you, and we won't try," Dr. Escamilla said, adding, "That is not possible. Not in our lifetime."

He concluded, "On behalf of the entire community, the Del Mar College community and the greater South Texas community, we thank you for your love and devotion to this institution."

Vice President of Development and Donor Advising Matthew Busby also announced **two new scholarships established to honor Keas' contributions to the college and the South Texas community throughout her career.**

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Keas Retirement Recognition and New Scholarships Announcement

“Someone in our community who is a big fan of Lenora Keas and her professionalism has created two scholarships in her name,” Busby said. “These scholarships will be the **Lenora Keas Endowed Scholarship** and the **Lenora Keas Scholarship for Rockport Workforce Students** with the Del Mar College Foundation [managing these scholarships and carrying] on her legacy of impact today and moving forward.”

Having grown up around the Rockport area, Keas has led the college’s acquisition and renovation initiative for the Del Mar College Workforce Development Center–Aransas County to expand higher education in the region ([read the release](#)), which is attributable to the establishment of a scholarship focused on that area’s workforce development.

A web page has been set up for anyone to gift any size donation supporting these scholarships and can visit give.delmar.edu/lenorakeas.

Additionally, the DMC Foundation will begin taking scholarship applications online for the next academic year (2026-2027) beginning Feb. 1, 2026.

During the Dec. 9 recognition, the Board of Regents also gifted to Keas a favorite pelican painting she admired that hung in Rockport’s City Hall. Regent David Loeb recalled a trip he and Keas made to discuss with city leaders some coding issues related to the college’s renovation project.

“Lenora and I were sitting [there], and she was looking at this painting,” he explained. “I asked her if she liked it, and she said ‘Yes.’”

So, this gift is to you from the Board,” he added as the painting was presented.

Keas then spoke and noted, “The reason I love pelicans is because when I come back in life, I’m going to be a brown pelican that dives in the water [...] not the pretty kind but the spunky kind that gets in the water and eats the fish.”

“So that’s the symbolism of the pelican. And I think here at Del Mar, we’re the workers and the doers and touch people lives, and so we’re ALL pelicans,” she added about the DMC community.

Keas also addressed colleagues with words she had written sometime in the past and said, “Seldom in life do you get to do what you really want to do and enjoy every day. But to be able to do it with steadfast friends is even more meaningful. And I’ve had the great pleasure of being able to do that [...] and touching lives is a true gift.”

“And, we all have it,” she added. “So, what you’ve done and what you do every day makes such a difference.”

-DMC-mce