

# Rose Garden at Mesa Community College Celebrates 25 Years

A celebration was held in December

2022 commemorating the 25th anniversary of The Rose Garden at Mesa Community College. Attending the event were Mesa City Councilmembers; leaders, faculty and staff of Mesa Community College; and officers and volunteers from the American Rose Society and the Mesa-East Valley Rose Society. Those sharing their memories of the establishment of the Rose Garden included Dr. Larry Christensen, former president of MCC; Jared Langkilde, former director of the Rose Garden and current president/CEO of the HonorHealth Foundation; Peter Conden, Rose Garden executive director; and LeRoy Brady, Rose Garden architect.

During the ceremony, Dr. Tammy Robinson, MCC president, applauded the collaboration forged with the rose societies and community volunteers to create such a stunning welcome to campus with

the invitation to "Come. Enjoy. Thrive." More than a conservatory, the Rose Garden is a living lab for kindergarten through college students studying biology, botany, and horticulture as well as the artists who come to paint and create works inspired by nature.

President Robinson also pointed out that The Rose Garden brings global acclaim to the City of Mesa and MCC with rankings among the Best Things to Do in Mesa by sites such as the Canadian adventure travel Treksplorer, Tripadvisor, Vacation Ideas magazine, Yelp and the Japanese travel site Trip 101.

Diana Sommers, American Rose Society President, spoke of the long and colorful history of roses. Fossils of the flower 35 million years old have been found in Europe. Millions of dollars are spent annually on research, growing and selling roses in the United States.

Arizona produces more than 75 percent of the country's rose bushes because its climate allows them to bloom for nearly eight out of 12 months. In 2000, the Rose Garden at MCC was approved by the All-America Rose Selections organization to become one of 26 test gardens, becoming one of the top three AARS Test Gardens in the nation.

Tanya Smith, administrative associate in the MCC Office of the Senior Associate Vice President, received a citation for her 25 years of work for the Rose Garden from Sommers on behalf of the American Rose Society.

Conden, also co-director of the MCC Arboretum, recognized volunteers who helped found and continue to cultivate the Rose Garden. Among those acknowledged for their service were Helen Baird, LeRoy Brady, Marylou Coffman, Carole Holkenbrink, Mike Jepsen and Steve Sheard. He also acknowledged Mike Cryer for his work as the volunteer coordinator for nearly two decades.

The celebration finale included the presentation of a plaque commemorating the 25th Anniversary and speakers and dignitaries joining MCC President Robinson for the cake cutting.

Open to the public, the best months to visit the Rose Garden are April through June and October through December when the roses are in full bloom. The largest public rose garden in the Desert Southwest, the Rose Garden is part of MCC's 140-acre arboretum, the first in Arizona to earn accreditation from the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program and The Morton Arboretum. MCC is the only community college in Arizona to be named a Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation.



Learn more at [rosegarden.mesacc.edu](https://rosegarden.mesacc.edu)

